

Critical discourse analysis of the United States foreign and security-political changes from President Bush to President Obama

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<p>This graduate thesis studies the foreign- and security politics of the United States through the formation of national identity. It specifically investigates the country's foreign policy towards the United Nations, and changes in it, during two presidential terms. The thesis observes the second term of President George. W. Bush (from 2005 to 2008) and the first term of President Barack Obama (from 2009 to 2012). The subject matter is relevant in the field of world political studies for multiple reasons: The hegemonic status of the United States in an increasingly interconnected world, the unilateral tendency of the country tied to the attitude towards and the meaning of the UN, and the concepts of security and danger tied to the current discussion on the relevance of a nation-state as the main actor in responding to the common threats the world faces today.</p> <p>The method of critical identity and discourse analysis is used when approaching the subject. The basis for the US foreign policy formation is understood as coming from domestic structures and challenges instead of from outside threats, and for that reason the main empirical material for analysis is the State of the Union- speeches by the presidents. After analyzing the rhetoric of these speeches, the thesis indicates changes in concrete policy decisions by both presidents. The beginning hypothesis is that as the presidency shifts from the republican party to the democratic party, some changes in the foreign policy paradigm should occur. This is closely tied to the nature of the US political structure of Constitutional and Presidential democracy.</p> <p>The main discourses emerging from the analysis are danger and unilateralism for President Bush, and responsible leadership and multilateralism for President Obama. The strongest discourse, however, is determined as the discourse of American exceptionalism, and that serves both presidents. The presidential rhetoric shows a wide array of changes in the foreign and security- policy paradigms of the presidents, but the concrete decision-making indicates more continuity than change.</p> <p>The thesis concludes that even though President Bush was seen unfavorably by the international community at the end of his presidency, and much hope and expectations were placed on the shoulders of President Obama, have many at the end of Obama's first term expressed feelings of disappointment towards his achievements and indicated a lack of delivery. The results of the research show that the dominant backbone behind the US foreign policy, the identity of American exceptionalism, has not changed with the presidential shift. The foreign and security political paradigm still reflects domestic struggles with the national identity and aim towards the continuity of the country's hegemonic status in the world order. The research concludes that only through changes in the national political identity can the US reform its attitude towards the international community and act as a visionary in world politics.</p>			
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<p>Pro gradu -tutkielma tarkastelee Yhdysvaltojen ulko- ja turvallisuuspolitiikkaa kansallisen identiteetin muodostamisen kautta. Erityisesti tutkitaan maan YK -politiikkaa ja muutoksia siinä kahden eri presidentin valtakaudella. Tarkastelussa on presidentti George W. Bushin toinen valtakausi (2005-2008) ja presidentti Barack Obaman ensimmäinen valtakausi (2009-2012). Aihe on relevantti maailmanpolitiikan tutkimuksen kannalta useasta syystä: Yhdysvaltojen suurvalta-asemaa pohditaan yhä verkottuneemmassa maailmassa, maan unilateralistisia ratkaisuja pohditaan suhteessa siihen millaisena Yhdysvallat näkee YK:n roolin nykypäivänä, ja turvallisuuden ja vaaran käsitteitä pohditaan sidottuna siihen ajankohtaiseen kysymykseen, miten tärkeänä tai epäolennaisena nykypäivänä pidetään kansallisvaltion roolia maailman yhteisten ongelmien ratkaisemisessa.</p> <p>Aihetta lähestytään kriittisen identiteetti- ja diskurssianalyysin keinoin. Yhdysvaltojen ulkopoliittikan muodostumisen lähtökohdaksi asetetaan maan sisäiset haasteet ulkopuolelta tulevien uhkien sijaan, josta syystä empiriseen analyysiin otetaan presidenttien 'State of the Union'- puheet. Puheiden retoriikkaa analysoidaan, jonka jälkeen tarkastellaan konkreettisia muutoksia presidenttien ulkopoliittisissa linjavedoissa. Lähtökohdaksi otetaan oletamus siitä että presidentin vaihtuessa republikaanipuolueen edustajasta demokraattipuolueen edustajaksi jonkinasteista muutosta olisi odotettavissa. Tähän liittyy olennaisesti Yhdysvaltojen sisäpoliittinen luonne perustuslaillisena ja presidentillisenä demokratiana.</p> <p>Analyysissä nousee esiin presidentti Bushin osalta uhan ja unilateralismin diskurssit, ja presidentti Obaman kohdalla vastuullisen johtamisen ja multilateralismin diskurssit. Kuitenkin vahvimaksi nousee molemmille presidenteille yhteinen 'American exceptionalism' -diskurssi. Retoriikan osalta muutoksia presidenttien linjavedoissa näkyy runsaastikin, mutta konkreettisia ulkopoliittisia päätöksiä analysoitaessa päädytään siihen että jatkuvuutta on enemmän kuin muutosta.</p> <p>Johtopäätöksenä todetaan että vaikka presidentti Bush oli kautensa lopulla kansainvälisen yhteisön epäsuosiossa ja presidentti Obamalta odotettiin paljon, on Obamaa kohtaan osoitettu hänen ensimmäisen kautensa lopulla pettymystä muutosten vähäisyyden takia. Tutkimustulokset osoittavat että Yhdysvaltojen ulkopoliittisen mission piilevä taustaidea ja 'American exceptionalism' -identiteetti ei ole perustavanlaatuisesti muuttunut presidentin vaihdoksen myötä, ja presidenttien retoriikka sekä ratkaisut heijastelevat maan sisäpoliittista kamppailua ja kansallisen identiteetin ja siten valtion maailmanpoliittisen suurvalta-aseman jatkuvuutta ja pönkittämistä. Tutkija osoittaa että ainoastaan sisäisen poliittisen identiteetin muutoksen myötä voi Yhdysvallat muuttaa ulkopoliitiikkaansa ja toimia edelläkävijänä maailmanpoliittisissa muutoksissa.</p>			
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1 INTRODUCTION

“Part of my realism is that the United States cannot achieve salvation alone. It tried this from 1791 to 1945. It tried this in other ways from 1945 to 1990. I am predicting that it will try this again in still some other ways from 1990 to, say, 2025. But unless it realizes that there is no salvation that is not the salvation of all humankind, neither it nor the rest of the world will surmount the structural crisis of our world-system” (Immanuel Wallerstein 1995, 205).

The purpose of this thesis is to critically analyze changes in the United States (US) foreign policy. The current hegemonic status of the United States is rooted in many different aspects such as economic prosperity and global cultural immersion; however, this thesis will concentrate on the political power. The United States is the most powerful nation-state in the world today, but this status is continuously being debated around the world as we have entered the “era of 'groupism' - the construction of defensive blocks, each of which asserts an identity around which it builds solidarity, and struggles to survive alongside and against other such groups” (Wallerstein 1995, 6-7).

On paper the US is a member of many such groups, and has been a prominent founder of them, such as the United Nations (UN). Still, there is some question in whether the country is wholeheartedly dedicated to these groups, or merely wishes to control them and use as needed. The era of 'groupism' has also raised the question of the validity of the individual nation-state as the key player in the current world order, and has raised high hopes for the United Nations to assume greater responsibility and rise to an era of global organization (Münkler 2007, 146-147).

1.1 On the power and identity of the Empire

Many scholars have attempted to predict the longevity of the Empire of the United States. There are those who believe that the US heyday has already passed, and the state is on its way to decline and misery: “The today of which I speak began in 1945 and came to an end in 1990. In this period, in precisely this period and no longer, the United States was the hegemonic power of our world-system” (Wallerstein 1995, 176, see also

Patrick 2010). There are others who believe that the US Empire has not nearly even reached its high point today, and that the superpower will remain untouchable for decades, even centuries more, without needing anyone's assistance and without being threatened by anyone else (Robert Kagan 2003). There are those who acknowledge that some threats to the hegemony already exist, namely economical, and never admittedly politically or humanitarially valued (Joseph Nye 2002). Then there are still those, who have begun to understand and admit the power and influence of the softer values of the United Nations and other international organizations, such as the European Union (T.R. Reid 2004).

This thesis will attempt to find out how the United States foreign policy has changed over the years, as more and more talk concentrates on the diminishing importance of the nation state, and on the move towards more collaboration at the international level, in solving the contemporary global crises pressing our planet. As Wallerstein states; “during the present world transition, it is effective to work both at the local and at the world level, but it is now of limited use to work at the level of the national state” (1995, 6-7). Many seem to believe that the United States is not moving towards this trend, still strongly believing in the power of a nation-state. Others suggest that the hegemonic status of the country is enough to exempt it from any kind of 'groupism' and allows the country to act unilaterally (Patrick 2010). I believe that everyone agrees there are some challenges in the world today that no single country can solve without cooperation of others. Even those academics who believe that the US hegemonic decline is inevitable at some point, do believe that, for unidentified reasons, the country will still continue to push forward in its current path (Wallerstein 1995).

An integral part of this thesis is the analysis of the United States' political identity, and possible changes in it, towards the feeling of togetherness with the global humankind. In addition to the material superiority and the feeling of American exceptionalism the country possesses today, my opinion is that a certain superior identity that shows through in all official rhetoric affects the country's foreign policy-making in a fundamental way. The argument is that only through changes in the political identity, in other words, a change in the attitude towards other human beings non-American, can

the country shift focus and show a move towards a change in the world order. This would not imply that with this kind of change the US would lose power and status *per se*, but it does require a change in the way the country currently leads world politics. Kishore Mahbubani argues that “no appeal to universal ideals or principles will convince the US body politic to support multilateralism. Only an appeal to national self-interest will do so” (2003, 140). My argument is that the US has yet to realize those two are actually the same thing. One must help everyone in order to help oneself.

My research in the field of identity politics relies on David Campbell's post-structural writings on the topic, and on his way of seeing foreign policy as a political practice central to the constitution, production and maintenance of American political identity (1998). In his book *Writing Security. US Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, Campbell claims that the US security policy formation can be seen as a form of deconstructing national identity. According to Campbell, identity is always constructed through formulation of difference, and difference is constituted in relation to identity. The way in which Campbell describes the US identity as being formulated occurs through the differentiation of 'us' from the 'others', and the way to separate the others from us is via continuous articulation of discourses of danger. (1998, 9.)

The thinking of Chantal Mouffe on political identity can also be applied to the politics of the US. She claims that the acceptance of antagonism as an inherent part of a society determines the very ontological condition of a community. The notion that every identity is conditional and relies on the affirmation of difference sets the stage for a friend/enemy construction and collective identity formation. (2005, 2-3.) Mouffe, and Campbell, both argue that since the end of the Cold War the US has been struggling with the creation of a new political frontier to replace the old democratic/communist antagonism and debate (2005, 3-4). The open space left by the Cold War can be dangerous for a democratic system, as it may create an opportunity for the radical right to gain leverage in the political field with anti-democratic means, as it has been easier for them to found a new enemy to fight against, as has been for the moderates or the leftists (2005, 4-6). In the United States this has materialized in the emergence of the neo-conservative movement.

1.2 On the limits of the Constitutional democracy

Because the United States is claimed to be the most powerful nation-state today, this thesis will also dwell into the domestic democratic system of the country. Some argue that the Constitutional democratic system in the US itself is ill-suited for successful and stable foreign policy formulation. The US has a presidential democratic system, which allocates a considerable amount of power to the executive branch of the government. However, to balance that power the Constitution created a structure of separation of powers, which keeps the power of the President in check. This feature, which is missing in parliamentary democracies, makes Congress a coequal with the executive branch in foreign policy-making, and thus constrains the decision-making process, creates tension within the government, and may complicate US involvement in international institutions (Patrick 2010).

Another constraint in the US foreign policy-making stem from Münkler's (2007) statement that empires, as a general rule, require authoritarian leadership, and thus democratization would mean the collapse of the empire. This implies that the US would have to choose between its imperial politics or face the decline of its democratic practices. One reason for the democratic system not being well-fitted with empires is the fact that in a democratic system the leadership changes too often. Empires are viewed as long-lasting giants, but with the current democratic trends only “empires in a hurry” are able to form, and more often than not action taken in a hurry will lead to negative results. (Münkler 2007, 155.) In the US there are federal-level elections every two years, and campaigning is virtually continuous for all elected officials, as politics are practiced with keeping an eye on re-election (Aaltola and Salonius-Pasternak 2012).

As we have entered the era of 'groupism', much talk has been centered around the question of how to transfer domestic democracy to a global level, and on the status of domestic democracies as well. In an article called "Democracy-Enhancing Multilateralism" a prominent US academic Robert Keohane et al. (2009) discuss in general the currently existing multilateral institutions (MI), and more particularly, their democratic or undemocratic nature, and how they affect domestic democracies of

existing nation-states. The authors believe that the current debate on the issue idealizes the current state of domestic democracy, and takes too ambitious a goal for the MI's to reach (2009, 4). Domestic democratic institutions are often idealized and held to high respect, even though the reality may be far from democratic. The fact that we live in a liberal democracy has put us at a specific ease, without the need to periodically go back and check what the situation is in practice (*ibid.*, 5).

Keohane et al. move on to formulate a concept called constitutional democracy, which can be used to describe the existing contemporary democracies, especially in the US (2009, 5-9). This concept includes many of the institutional constraints that check and balance power in today's democracies, all of which are said to contribute to enhancing democracy in today's nation-states. Keohane et al. defend some of the "depoliticized" institutions in place, claiming that letting them do their work in an insulated, non-democratic vacuum, actually comes back to strengthen the democracy at the end, because of the valuable knowledge they provide to the people (*Ibid.*, 8). This kind of privatization has been the practice of the neo-conservative elite in the US.

If Keohane et al. have slim views of domestic democracies, they do so also of international institutions. The article rather bluntly states that MI's are not intended to be viewed so much as binding decision makers, but rather as transnational information networks, involving national officers and quasi-public bodies (*Ibid.*, 19). Moreover, MI's should be thought of, by national governments, as crisis centers where one can turn to at the moment of national security crisis, to ask for judiciary advice, or to search the institutions' wide array of published "best practices", and choose accordingly to fit the national situation (*Ibid.*, 20). It is clear that Keohane et al. consider MI's as something that exist separated from the citizens of nation-states, in a distance, unchangeable, and out of reach.

This is a radically different way of seeing the world and tackling global problems as is practiced by the United Nations and other international groupings, which rely on the concept of universal human rights and equality of all people regardless of nationality and other personal traits. Campbell's emphasis on security and identity politics can be

contrasted with a social constructivist Alexander Wendt's vision in "Why a World State is Inevitable" (2003) as seeing this as the great paradox and dilemma standing in the way of the current nation-states' ability to evolve into a global democratic community where the entire concept of a security threat has been removed. The UN, being an intergovernmental organization without an independent governing body, is thus freed from the task of articulating its own identity under a single democratic logic, and is able to concentrate on pressing global issues.

What Chantal Mouffe offers as a solution to this democratic deficiency Keohane et al. are claiming exists, is called antagonistic pluralism, which would manifest itself as a hegemony of democratic values achieved by a multiplication of democratic practices, institutionalized into a democratic matrix through which a multiplicity of subject identities could be formed (2005, 18). One instance of this would be to strengthen the existing multilateral institutions such as the United Nations.

Carol Gould (2009) points out that multilateral institutions implement global democracy, not domestic democracy, and thus the two are not intended to be exactly alike. Gould reminds us that global democracy should not be seen as one huge, collective body where all citizens on earth have an obligation to participate, but suggests that all those who would choose to participate in the decision making, should be able to do that, especially on issues where one is affected by the outcome. Instead of concentrating on a single world state type of a body, Gould would like to see more progress towards the creation of multiple transnational communities concentrating on different issues and deliberating in global forums. (2009, 2.) In these smaller scale global forums it would still be possible to include direct participation by citizens, which is now widely criticized to be lacking from global democracy (ibid., 15).

According to Michael Zürn, Keohane et al. seem to believe that global participation is quite impossible to achieve, if even desirable, and should remain at the decision-making level of "executive multilateralism" and political level of "embedded liberalism", where international organizations are considered to maintain some delegated authority, but are not integrated into the domestic political order that requires legitimacy (2010, 98). In a

contrast to this, Daniele Archibugi points out that rooting for global democracy does not necessarily include the desire to impoverish the function of the state (2010). However, in the creation of global democratic institutions, one should think of ways for them to represent global citizens instead of national governments (Gould 2009).

1.3 On the future of the US – UN relationship

Research in this field is vital today. As the relationship between the United States and many international organizations has been troublesome for some time, this thesis will take a critical look at the US foreign policy towards the United Nations. The UN will serve as a reference point when analyzing whether or not the US shows willingness to participate in the era of 'groupism' and formation of global democratic structures. At the same time as the US has been facing criticism for its foreign policy decisions, questions have been raised on the overall usefulness of the UN as a viable actor in the international arena. According to Yves Beigbeder, criticism has been raised regarding “...the poor performance of the UN in the maintenance of peace and security, in promoting development, in eradicating poverty and in protecting human rights,” among other things (Beigbeder 1997, 7).

The aim here is to determine whether the US is on track to repair its relationship with the UN, and simultaneously help reinstate the positive image of the UN to the world, or will it, instead, use this opportunity of the UN's bad reputation and turn its back completely on the organization and continue on the hegemonic road¹. Mahbubani states that it would serve the national interests of the US to strengthen, rather than weaken, the UN institutions (2003, 140). Still, the US has appeared uncommitted in the recent past.

In this light one might wonder how much the US foreign policy decisions affect the overall performance of the UN. It could be argued that for quite some time the US has

¹ In an unprecedented address to the UN Security Council in 2000, the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations, Jesse Helms, stated that if the UN did not respect the sovereignty of the American people, and if it attempts to impose authority over the US, the country will withdraw from the organization. Barbara Crossette, "Helms, in Visit to UN, Offers Harsh Message," New York Times, January 21, 2000.

been refusing to play by the rules of the UN (Ryan 2006, 174-175). The recent attitude of the US has shown that whenever the UN has failed to follow the country's lead, it has turned towards other international organizations for support, or alternatively, created brand new coalitions that are ready to act when needed. A US representative Kim Holmes claims that the Security Council has too often been "...unable to end conflicts, halt threats of aggression, or prevent proliferation. The right of self-defense thus plays an essential role in maintaining international peace and security" (2004).

Despite the above, the United States is still one of the United Nation's most prominent members, and has historically been one of its most deliberate financial supporters. Holmes argues that the US is still the UN's largest contributor and this implies that the UN is not insignificant to US foreign policy (2004). However, the United States, since the mid-1980's and until very recently, has remained also the greatest debtor to the UN, owing hundreds of millions to the UN regular budget, and more towards peacekeeping (Beigbeder 1997, 91, Mahbubani 2003). During this time, the European Union as a whole has surpassed the US as the largest contributor to the UN budget².

An interesting question is how strongly this relationship, with its problems, will affect the whole institution, which includes almost two hundred member states. Can the attitude of one country have a permanent effect on the whole institution? Will the US be able to freeze the entire organization on its demand, or is the UN community on the verge of reaching its limit of tolerance with this one member among the others, and could the US possibly face consequences for its actions? It is peculiar that even though it is clear that the US has acted illegally within the UN framework, the organization has taken no steps so far to punish the country for its actions (Ryan 2006, 183). My argument rests on the basis that the policies of the US, and those of the UN, are based on completely different grounds, and that is the reason why the two have so much trouble looking into a common future.

² "Since 1972, the U.S. is assessed at the ceiling rate of 25 per cent. For 1995, the European Union countries pay 34.39 per cent of the UN regular budget" (Beigbeder 1997, 95).

2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions in this thesis are the following:

1. Identifying instances of change in the foreign policy rhetoric and actual policy-making in two US presidential administrations.

I have chosen to study the second term of President George W. Bush (from 2005 to 2008) and the first term of President Barack Obama (from 2009 to 2012). The reason for choosing to study this topic from the presidential point of view stem from the global and very general iconization of the American president as the most powerful man in the world (Singh 2006, 28). Thus the hypothesis is that he must have an important say in the way his country shapes the global world order. Also, the foreign policy-making in the US has been described as having become more and more domesticated during the last decades, meaning that domestic issues rather than international political conditions have been the defining features in foreign policy formulation (Maidment and McGrew 1991, 141). Hence my thesis will look at domestic documents when interpreting the US foreign policy-making, instead of concentrating on international issues in which the US participates.

Choosing these two presidential terms stem from the fact that these two presidents represent the two prevailing and opposing political parties in the country, the Republican and the Democratic parties, and they come from very different personal backgrounds as well. That is an important domestic fact that should have a strong impact on foreign policy. Internationally, these years provide an excellent background as the debate on state versus global democracy has heightened recently, and the relationship between the US and the UN has been questionable. The goal is to find out whether or not policy-making has changed dramatically, or at all, after president Obama took office in 2009.³

³ Note: Since the first term of President Obama is not yet over at this writing, but I want to keep the research current, the nature of this paper is to use President Bush's term as the basis for comparison, and more analysis may be afforded to his policies. Moreover, my research will not reach into the campaign of President Obama's running for his second term, even though it is already on its way at the time of writing.

The beginning hypothesis is that some kind of change should have occurred with the presidential shift. The US practices presidential democracy by Constitution, which gives considerable amount of power to the president, and the cabinet he chooses for himself⁴. The presidential influence has been historically preeminent especially in the field of foreign policy-making (Maidment and McGrew 1991, 74, 83). Also, differences between the two parties, the Democrats and the Republicans, tend to be rather wide and openly debated, and the two opposing sides often promote very different foreign policies (Singh 2006, 16). The structure of separation of powers, according to Daniel Wirls, can sometimes serve as an invitation for the president to “go it alone, especially in the realm of foreign and national security policy. Congress will often cheer the president on in such unilateral endeavors.” (2010, 12.) This implies that rather drastic changes can always be expected when the presidency changes in the country.

In terms of personality traits, President Bush can be described to be a conservative, religious, and nationalistic leader who represents the rural areas of the country. President Obama, on the other hand, may be called a liberal, tolerant, with experience in the urban and international arenas. These descriptions can serve as a background when considering the signifying chain of the discourses. By the time the Bush presidency was drawing towards an end, he was not a very popular figure internationally⁵, and I remember the world expecting impatiently for a change in leadership in that country (Buckley and Singh 2006, 14). The election of President Obama was historical in many aspects, not least because of him being the first-ever president of the country with African-American inheritance (Aaltola and Salonius-Pasternak 2012, 4), and the world sure expected a lot from him.

⁴ The Constitution of the United States, Article II.

⁵ The Pew Global Attitudes Project polling data indicates that the public confidence in the US President in countries such as Germany, France, Japan, Russia, and China was at the lowest level in 2008, measured since 2005.
<http://www.pewglobal.org/database/indicator=6&country=181&response=Confidence>

The second research question is the following:

2. Identifying change in the foreign policy of the US towards the UN, analyzed through an identity formation perspective.

Even if some actual changes in the foreign policy-making appear apparent after the first Obama term, it needs to be determined whether or not the new policies serve to fulfill the same goals as before even though the country is getting there by different means. I will look for signs towards the crucial change in the attitude of the government of the United States towards the United Nations and the way in which international organizations are perceived by the country.

The hypothesis is that the underlying identity and idea behind the fundamental belief in the mission of the United States in the world has not changed a whole lot. At the beginning of my research project I tend to agree with Heikki Patomäki in *The Political Economy of Global Security* where he argues that the most likely future scenario will resemble closely the dynamics of the late 20th century politico-economic struggle and competition ending only in great destruction, instead of us standing on the verge of an unseen witnessing of a great leap of improvement in the human condition resulting in global peace and democracy (2008).

3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE UNITED STATES

"Realism was first developed systematically by twentieth-century thinkers such as Morgenthau and Waltz although it is often associated with a great tradition of political thinkers which includes Thucydides, Hobbes, and Machiavelli. Long the dominant perspective in International Relations, realism emphasizes the unending competition for power and security in the world of states. Sovereignty, anarchy, and the security dilemma are crucial terms in its lexicon; in the main the idea of global progress is absent from its vocabulary" (Scott Burchill 2005,103).

The nature of this thesis is to be a theoretical, qualitatively critical analysis of written materials. The view of the researcher is that theory is of an utmost importance in any attempt to explain international relations. The aim is to view the world ontologically and explain the world system as it is hierarchically organized today, and to attempt to predict how it may change in the future. As the main focus of the thesis is on the United States foreign policy, it will be explained most thoroughly. This chapter offers a brief historical outlook of the meta-theories behind the recent US administrations: liberalism⁶, realism, and neorealism. Throughout the thesis I will introduce thinkers critical of these International Relations meta-theories and who represent alternative approaches to understanding the world, such as radicalism, social constructivism, and post-structuralism, because these theories have been more vocal about the changes they wish to see in the international system.

Chapter 4 describes the United Nations' foundational theory of liberal internationalism. I will then explain briefly the internal structure of the UN and the role of the US in it. In chapters 5 and 6 I will dwell deeper into the United States' political culture, and specifically detail different approaches to security politics through theories of balance of power, collective security, sovereignty and unilateralism. The initial attitude towards these theories and the usage of them by the leaders indicates how the US sees itself situated in the current world order.

⁶ The role of liberalism (and neoliberalism) in this thesis has been left at the minimal handling, as the researcher's view is that even though it is a relevant theory in the field of the United States' economic policies, and describes the international political economy of today, the theory of realism (and neorealism) better describes the US political spectrum for the purposes of this thesis.

3.1 From liberalism to realism

Before World War I (WW I) liberalism was the dominant international relations theory. WW I was supposed to be the war to end all wars, and international atmosphere was hopeful for peaceful coexistence. There existed an ideological way of thinking that the world would be a better place if only states wanted it to be. These hopes turned out to be false, however, and the period resulted in another, even more destructive war, World War II (WW II). In the aftermath of WW II nobody held any unrealistic utopias anymore, and the international arena was described as Hobbesian anarchy. The prevailing international theory since the mid-20th century, and the backbone behind the creation of the United Nations, has thus been realism.

Classical realism is traced back to writers such as Thucydides, Machiavelli, Morgenthau, Weber, and Carr (Lebow 2010, 59.) The realists criticized the liberals by claiming that one needs to look at the world simply as it is, and not how one would like it to be. Realism understands that existing forces are much stronger than the interest to change. Realists are often pessimists about the capabilities of humans (or states) to change. The United States' power and security politics can be called Classical realist, with the rhetoric of Great Powers and the task of maintaining the world's strongest military. Classical realism also understands that a great power often turns out to be its own worst enemy, as power welcomes first success and then hubris, and blinds the actors to the need of self-restraint (Lebow 2010, 60).

3.2 From Neorealism to Neo-conservatism

The basic claim in this thesis is that the United States government sees the world through a neorealist lens. Kenneth Waltz's neorealist theory can specifically be applied here, based on his 1979 book *Theory of International Politics*. Christian Reus-Smith describes Waltz as having advanced a radically revised theory, based on realism, which may also be called structural realism. Neorealism builds on two basic assumptions: the world order remaining anarchical, due to the lack of a central authority, and that resulting in states' primary goal of survival by maximization of power, and particularly

their military power (Burchill et al. 2005, 210-211). Classical realism and neorealism both share the fundamental view of states' need to accumulate power, but they differ in the reasons for that. Classical realism believes that the answer is human nature; a man's will to have power and dominate others. Structural realists, on the other hand, claim that the structure of the international system forces states to pursue power in order to survive. (Mearsheimer 2010, 78.)

In *Neorealism and its Critics*, Waltz describes the domestic political sphere as integrated, hierarchical, and organized, because the government provides protection to its citizens through the monopoly on the legitimate use of force. This is not the case in the international sphere where a central government is nonexistent, and that is the reason why interdependence and cooperation is possible only at a very loose level. According to Waltz, the structure of the current international system limits the cooperation of states because of the constant feeling of insecurity and mistrust, and the fear of becoming dependent on another state. Because the possibility of war is always present, self-sufficiency and widening of the scope of control have to be the state's main concerns. (Waltz 1986.) As stated in *Social Theory of International Politics*, Wendt's interpretation of the situation is that neorealists are able to stand behind a shield of their theory, and explain all of their foreign policy behavior as evidence of maintaining the balance of power in the anarchical system (1999).

Within the neorealist camp there is a division between those who believe that states should seek to maximize their power to the limit and aim for hegemony, also called offensive realists, and those who believe that “appropriate amount of power” is enough to maintain the balance of power in the international system (Waltz 1979, 40), often called defensive realists (Mearsheimer 2010, 81). Defensive realists claim that if one state becomes hegemonic, other great powers will automatically start balancing against it. The offensive realists stand closer to classical realists in believing that power is an end in itself, whereas defensive realists treat power as a means to ensure survival. (ibid. 78.) Mearsheimer claims, moreover, that realism has made a resurrection after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the US, and the current world order is still mainly concerned with military politics, power, and survival. Rise in nationalism, which

glorifies the state, ensures the position of the state as superior. (2010, 92.)

Neo-conservatism is the mainstream theory that has been identified with President George W. Bush's administration. It is no doubt certain that the political worldview of the sitting president, especially in the United States with a presidential democratic system, is an important factor in the foreign policy formation, as is stated by Haas: "The content of a world-order ideology is a projection of a policy-maker's implicit or explicit theory about the world" (1990, 65). That is why it is crucial to research how neo-conservatism together with neorealism has comprised the platform for the US policy formation. One of the main aims of the thesis is to show that neo-conservatism has been replaced with something else since the Barack Obama administration took office in 2009.

Chantal Mouffe describes the neo-conservative movement in the US as having first been raised in the 1960's to guard against 'excess of democracy' (2005, 23). The movement aimed to restrict the power of the numerous social movements at the time and warned against the "danger that this explosion of egalitarian claims poses to the system of authority" (2005, 23). Lebow explains the rise of neo-conservatives in the US as having occurred after the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, as the 'unipolar moment' in history begun (2010, 72).

What is interesting in regards to neo-conservatism, is that President Bush himself has not been called a neo-conservative, nor has he claimed to be one. Instead, this label has been attached to his close aides and advisers especially during his first term, from 2000 to 2004. The names most often linked to the label include Paul Wolfowitz, Lewis Libby, Richard Perle, Dick Cheney, and Donald Rumsfeld. Stephen Ryan describes their neo-conservative strategy as involving a hardheaded realist worldview combined with a strong belief in the US exceptionalism. This includes a strong belief in the material powers as well as the moral superiority of the country. The neo-conservative foreign policy stance has also been described as the most hostile towards the UN in the past few decades. (Ryan 2006, 175.)

4 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE UNITED NATIONS

"The USA is sometimes described as hegemonic, with the burdens, benefits, and temptations dominance implies. It does not always behave as a Kantian state. With military spending nearly as great as all the rest of the world, it is tempted to rely on the armed force that money and high technology create. But hegemony cannot last forever. A Kantian liberal perspective on world politics can provide means for sustaining a stable peace when military advantage fades" (Bruce Russett 2010, 112).

4.1 From liberal internationalism to global democratic projections

During the latter part of the 20th century, and the beginning of the 21st century, some progress has been evidenced towards accomplishing a more peaceful world order. This is especially true among the liberal democratic states (that constitute the majority of the UN Security Council: France, UK, and USA) and in other countries around the world. Aside from maintaining peace, states today are much more interconnected through neoliberal international economic policies and practices. New regional economic, political, as well as military blocks have been formed, and thus the Western World as well as Russia and China have seen less conflict with each other during the past decades. This is not to say that conflicts and wars around the world have ceased to exist, however. All these developments have inspired the United Nations, as well as other international actors, to abandon the more pessimistic realist worldview, and to adopt a more positive and fresh ideology, under the title of liberal internationalism.

Liberal internationalism is associated with such classical thinkers as John Locke and Immanuel Kant. This theory is also concerned with solving the security dilemma in the international arena. Kant envisioned a 'pacific federation' of nation states bound together by cosmopolitan laws and collective security alliances. The way to achieve this lasting peace is through the spread of democratic governments, international interaction and close cooperation in the economic field, as well as memberships in normative international organizations. The liberal view puts more weight than the realist view on the ability of the human being to progress and to achieve peace by rational self-interest

and cooperation with others. (Russett 2010, 96-104.)

Even though the liberal internationalist view accepts the basic underlying structures of neorealism, the more idealist view is that cooperation is still possible in an anarchic world and even without a hegemon. Predictability of state action, and thus a more stable world, can be achieved through regimes and institutional cooperation with shared habits and interests, including monitoring of compliance and possible sanctions (Burchill 2005, 65). The main difference between neorealism and the liberal intergovernmental view lies in the neorealist separation of the domestic and international spheres. According to Andrew Linklater "the existence of a more or less unbridgeable gulf between domestic and international politics is a central theme in realist and especially neorealist thought" (2005, 103). Linklater continues to interpret Waltz as follows: According to this approach, states cannot escape the politics of 'self-help' which separates the international political system from national politics" (2005, 109).

Scott Burchill describes neorealists to claim that "the moral aspirations of states are thwarted by the absence of an overarching authority which regulates their behavior towards each other. The anarchical nature of the international system tends to homogenize foreign policy behavior by socializing states into the system of power politics. The requirements of strategic power and security are paramount in an insecure world, and they soon override the ethical pursuits of states, regardless of their domestic political complexions" (2005, 57). This implies that no amount of democratic nations and no theory of democratic peace will convince the neorealists as long as there is no legal authority on global level. The above statement also fits with the neo-conservative policies of the US where the status awarded to security overrides all other aspects of politics and explains and justifies even non-democratic practices by the leaders.

The European Union is a valid example of a grouping that has completely abandoned the neorealist theory. The EU has been moving further and further away from this type of self-help policy as the line between national and international politics hardly exists anymore, and the states of the union are increasingly willing to resign their sovereignty for the common good (Russett 2010, 109-111). The UN, on the other hand, never really

had that decision to make in the first place, since its aspirations have always concerned the common, international good.

The world has matured from a post-WWII multipolar intergovernmental system into a unipolar hegemonic global order, and now awaits for a new structural framework to be put in place. As many have acknowledged, the largest stakeholder, as well as the main motor and the only unit that would be able to provide the right leadership towards achieving a single global community, is the United States (Mahbubani 2003, 152). Murphy agrees with the task ahead stating that in the creation of a new world order the US should assume the role of a leader but not a dominant one (2004, 359). Even Waltz accepts that hegemonies do not last forever, and he does not even promote a unipolar world as the source of lasting peaceful order. Waltz, however, does not see a way in which a hegemon could transform itself into a responsible leader from a dominant power (Burchill 2005, 61). I see the United Nations as having the capability of providing the needed structural framework for global democratic practices, member states willing to promote it.

4.2 The Role of the United States in the United Nations' Structure

“The United Nations does extraordinary good around the world -- feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, mending places that have been broken. But it also struggles to enforce its will, and to live up to the ideals of its founding. I believe that those imperfections are not a reason to walk away from this institution -- they are a calling to redouble our efforts. The United Nations can either be a place where we bicker about outdated grievances, or forge common ground; a place where we focus on what drives us apart, or what brings us together; a place where we indulge tyranny, or a source of moral authority. In short, the United Nations can be an institution that is disconnected from what matters in the lives of our citizens, or it can be an indispensable factor in advancing the interests of the people we serve.” (President Barack Obama, September 23, 2009⁷)

⁷ Remarks by the President to the United Nations General Assembly United Nations Headquarters New York, New York on September 23, 2009 accessed via http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-to-the-United-Nations-General-Assembly .

As the relationship between the US and the UN is multifaceted and complex (Buckley and Singh 2006), the UN system covering a wide range of interest areas, it is necessary to limit the research in this paper to certain issue areas within that relationship. In my thesis I will be concentrating on areas of power and security, and touching upon the issue of rule of law. The body of the UN most effectively involved with these issues is the Security Council as the only unit capable of producing binding obligations for the member states.

Ambassador Joseph M Torsella (2012) describes the UN as follows: "What began as a diplomatic meeting-place for 53 countries, with a small budget for typists and interpreters, is now a vast and diverse public organization, with 193 members most of whom were not even states in 1945. The UN system is involved in everything from feeding malnourished children to ensuring sustainable political transitions to preserving world heritage sites. According to UN figures, the entire UN system is now a \$36 billion enterprise, larger than the individual GDPs of half its member states."

As the UN has matured over the decades, so the world has changed and requires constant reform from the participants in the global system. As the Secretary-General of the UN stated in the Millennium Report: "While the post-war multilateral system made it possible for the new globalization to emerge and flourish, globalization, in turn, has progressively rendered its designs antiquated. Simply put, our post-war institutions were built for an *international* world, but we now live in a *global* world. Responding effectively to this shift is the core institutional challenge for world leaders today"⁸.

The UN body viewed most unfavorably by the US is the General Assembly. The Assembly represents the masses, the peoples of the world, and in it every country is equal with only one vote. The Assembly delivers resolutions after vocal debates, and it has a history of raising criticism in its publications. These resolutions can irritate member states (such as the US). However, they are not able to hurt individual governments as the decisions are not legally binding. (Mahbubani 2003, 141.) In

⁸ Report of the Secretary-General on the Millennium Assembly entitled "We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the Twenty-First Century," March 27, 2000 accessed via <http://www.un.org/millennium/sg/report/full.htm> .

contrast to this, the UN Secretariat as well as the Security Council have historically been sympathetic and respectful of the US. The Security Council represents the aristocracy of the UN, and it does not come as a surprise that the five countries with the veto-power have not been keen to take part in the UN reform. Only one time has a Secretary-General of the UN been recalled to take a stance opposite the US (Boutros-Ghali), and his term was not renewed due to a US veto (ibid. 142).

The great paradox in the relationship between the US and the UN lies in the fact that whenever the UN demonstrates independence from the US, and its policy does not necessarily coalesce with the US short-term interests, the US protests, even though the UN decision would ultimately advance the US long-term interests (Mahbubani 2003, 149). Mahbubani describes the current US policy towards the UN as putting pressure on the organization from two different ends, and thus not receiving any desired results. This means that as the US attempts to shape the UN system to comply with its own interests, and at the same time trying to form the organization to manage larger global interests, the system may eventually fall apart without achieving anything (ibid. 149). This again shows the non-committed nature of the US to the inherent values of the UN.

5 SELECTIVE APPROACHES TO SECURITY

5.1 Balance of power theory

According to Kenneth Waltz (1979), the only distinct theory about international politics to date is the balance of power theory. Balances of power prevail, when the international order remains anarchic, and its units (states) wish to survive. The theory makes assumptions about the interests and motives of states, and it explains the constraints that confine all states in the system. Waltz says it is expected that states tend to emulate the successful policies of others, and thus balances recurrently keep forming. This is still the reality of the international order, as states continuously compete against each other, in the absence of a central world government. Balances keep forming and the order may change from unipolar to bi-polar and even to a multipolar balance. Balance of power theory is supported by the realist camp in world politics, and the US can be said to be supportive of this system.

In this reality, the United Nations, and namely its Security Council (SC), was founded in 1945 on the principle theory of balance of power⁹. This was the only way to make international cooperation possible after the devastating two World Wars. The balance is based on the veto-power of the five permanent members of the council (France, The United Kingdom, The United States, China, and Soviet Union¹⁰). Robert Cox argued already in his 1987 book that it was more than clear at that point already, which two countries were the determining ones (the US and the Soviet Union), and which three were chosen as members in acknowledgment of their historic status in world affairs (Britain, France, and China). This framework still exists in the Security Council despite numerous changes in the international arena, including disappearance and formation of countries, such as Russia, and creation of strong political regional blocks such as the European Union, and the rise in global attention and importance of the continents of Africa and South America, for example. Although many years have been spent debating and negotiating the much needed Security Council reform, nothing concrete has yet been achieved.

⁹ Charter of the United Nations, Article V.

¹⁰ The Soviet Union has since ceased to exist and the country in the SC is now called Russia.

5.2 Collective security

Closely tied to the theory of liberal internationalism is the concept of collective security, that preferably replaces the balance of power concept altogether. Scott Burchill claims that; "balance of power was the product of elite collusion which resulted in international relations being arranged to suit the interests of those who ruled Great Powers" (2005, 45). This change in the ideology has also sparked an interest to reform the Security Council from the 1945 setup. The former opposing camps in the SC after the world wars today agree increasingly with each other, as the tasks of the UN have evolved throughout the years. They no longer need to fight and balance each other, but instead work together to advance the peace for all humankind. Heikki Patomäki describes collective security as follows:

"Alker, Biersteker, and Inoguchi (1989) treat collective security simply as a power-balancing alternative. They argue, quite provocatively, that 'Wilsonian collective security was not diametrically opposed to power-balancing, but rather redefined and globalized an older Eurocentric power-balancing system' (Alker *et al.* 1989:145). The only difference was/is that any threat to peace was/is assumed to be of basic concern to all members of the international society. Consequently, aggression was/is outlawed by a 'balance' of 'all against one' (2002, 62-63)".

This sums up perfectly the current security-theory behind the UN. Whether or not this has been realized in practice is another question. If all agree to act as all for one, what happens when someone decides not to play by the rules whenever they do not benefit from them? The world has seen many of these situations recently in the disputes between the United States and the United Nations, when the US has acted unilaterally according to its own interests. In addition to giving concrete examples of disputes, Ryan argues that the United States has never been fully committed to the Charter principles of collective security and peaceful settlements of disputes, if they happen to conflict with the vital national interests of the US. In sum, no president of the US has ever given the UN much influence in foreign policy-making. (Ryan 2006, 176.)

The European Union (EU), on the other hand, has for decades now been engaged in the process of creating a liberal intergovernmental community of collective security that has deliberately chosen to end conflicts within its ever-growing borders, as well as to promote peace outside its borders. Liberal institutionalism, of which the EU is also an example, believes that cooperation within states is possible even in an anarchic world, and even without a hegemon (Russett 2010). Anarchy can be conquered by regimes that constrain state behavior, and EU and the UN are examples of these types of regimes. According to John F. Murphy, the European Union countries have created themselves a new legal order, that is more than a new branch of international law, and borders on being a state in itself, and which enjoys supremacy over the national law of all member states (Murphy 2004, 354). The US has shown no willingness to cooperate regionally in security matters aside from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which it clearly dominates.

Alexander Wendt is one to believe that before it is possible for humans to concentrate on saving this planet, the states need to be able to believe that war is completely off the agenda. This is why Wendt believes that the current international system will eventually move, in five stages, to a world state with common security and collective identity, where the security dilemma does not exist. According to Wendt, in the current situation, it is expected that a "hyper-power" such as the US is acting unilaterally with "go it alone power", as well as for small and middle sized powers to federate and combine their strength against the hegemony, like the EU has been performing. Wendt's conclusion is that even though a hegemon can afford to stall development towards a more peaceful world order, there is nothing it can do in the end but join the others in the pursuit, or face complete destruction (Wendt 2003). Which path will the US take?

5.3 Sovereignty

Closely related to the security subject matter is the changing value given to the term sovereignty, in theory as well as in practice. Carl Christol defines the historical Westphalian concept of sovereignty as follows: "In the 17th century, at a time of international anarchy, the concept of national sovereignty offered protection to the legal

right of a State to continue its existence without foreign interference” (2004, 14). The world has, however, moved on from the times of national head of states' unlimited right to protection above all law. Christol believes that national leaders today are obliged to take into account the relationship between their own state and the UN, as well as the ever-growing number of other intergovernmental organizations in which states perform foreign policy, and which restrict the unilateral exponents of policy-making (2004, 11). A country's attitude towards sovereignty is closely tied to the national values and identity of the state, and constitutes a major factor in foreign policy formation.

David Malone and Yuen Foong Khong posit the defense of the United States sovereignty as the defining principle in the US foreign policy (2003, 19). This is a clear case of realism. In a contrast to this, the EU countries, for example, have deliberately chosen, according to liberal theory, to reduce their national sovereignty in the hands of the increasing supra-national nature of their politics, whereas in the United States the value placed on sovereignty seems to increase as is the nature in a neorealist system. Mahbubani argues that most people in the world, except those residing in the US, understand and actually feel the impact of globalization and the loss of autonomy each day (2003, 139). The protection of sovereignty in the US includes the consideration of domestic norms, laws, and standards as prior and superior to any international ones (Malone and Khong 2003, 19).

Malone and Khong argue that other states promote multilateralism not only because it helps them advance their own global position, but also because they truly see multilateralism as an important liberal goal in itself (2003, 21). This again has to do with the question of identity and attitude towards others in the world, and implies that the US sees itself above others instead of as equals. Murphy also states that the reasons behind the US protection of sovereignty lies in the inherent attitude of “triumphalism, exceptionalism, and provincialism”, and reflects a fundamental distrust towards centralized powers, which is mirrored in the US Constitution (2004, 354).

It has been previously stated that one of the main features of a neorealist worldview is to draw a distinct line between the domestic and the international spheres. The

hypothesis is that the US tends to rely mainly on national law and sovereignty, and it uses international law only in cases where it can be of positive influence to the country. This includes completely disregarding international law any time it may not be of assistance to the foreign policy goals of the government.

This can be contrasted by the sole usage of international law by the United Nations. The largest difference can be found in the underlying attitude behind the formation of international law within the international system and within the United States. The reason for creating international law for the UN lies in the fact that it works as a tool for countries to tackle problems they could not resolve alone. It also serves as a protection to all member states, from each other as well as from outside threats. By being members, states recognize and respect the laws of the system and in all of their behavior make sure that they abide by them. This is how, ideally, member states see the UN. The US, on the other hand, maintains the attitude that international law may be used if it adds something positive to its national law, but when it does not, it will be sharply ignored. This is possible, of course, because there is no binding legal authority at the international level.

6 THE UNITED STATES AND UNILATERALISM

"Today military intervention is progressively less a product of decisions that arise out of the old international order or even U.N. Structures. More often it is dictated unilaterally by the United States, which charges itself with the primary task and then subsequently asks its allies to set in motion a process of armed containment and/or repression of the current enemy of Empire. These enemies are most often called terrorist, a crude conceptual and terminological reduction that is rooted in a police mentality" (Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri 2001, 37).

Since the term unilateralism has been increasingly used to characterize the United States foreign policy-making in recent years, it is essential to cover that concept in detail in this research. The latest move in the US towards unilateralism began during the Clinton administration, but accelerated under the Bush presidency. Lebow describes the neo-conservatives as having mistaken power for influence, and felt that the hegemony was not bound by any norms, treaties, or agreements that would constrain the pursuit of the interests of the country (2010, 72).

The term unilateralism can be used to describe a policy by a country that opts out of a multilateral framework, or acts alone when facing and addressing a global or regional challenge, instead of choosing to participate in collective action (Malone and Khong 2003, 3). In contrast, the term multilateralism may refer to multiple situations from a coalition of three or more individual states working together to broad formal multilateral organizations (ibid. 2). For the purpose of this thesis, the concentration will be on analyzing the US participation in multilateral institutions such as the UN. Specifically, the attempt is to analyze the degree to which the US respects and follows international rules and laws, or chooses to ignore them when facing challenges to national security.

Carl Christol, in *International Law and U.S. Foreign Policy*, defines unilateralism as follows: "Unilateralism, with its emphasis on national sovereignty, holds that States are free to choose their foreign policies. This outlook is favored by States well-positioned because of their economic, military, scientific, and technological attributes" (2004, 16).

The United States is the most powerful country in the world today, so is it authorized to act unilaterally? Even though it is not clear where this authorization stems from, the US has been acting increasingly unilaterally in recent years (Ryan 2007). Christol describes the US attitude towards the UN and other international organizations as them having the burden of proving to the US that it would be beneficial to the interests of the country to participate in and follow common policies, whereas multilaterally oriented parties to these organizations believe that the signing on to common Charters and agreements clearly demonstrate their relevance and should not be questioned afterward (2004, 17).

The recent neorealist/neo-conservative practice of the US foreign policy may, and has already, caused conflicts between the US and the UN, which is a major supporter of multilateralism between states. Patomäki among others views this as a major concern of our time: "Will the second phase of hegemony of the USA, accompanied by its increasing unilateralism and arrogance, lead to the erosion of the major co-operative institutions of the post-Second World War world?" (2002, 132) This is a question this thesis seeks to answer.

Unilateralist policies can rarely be described to promote international peace and security. Furthermore they do not enhance interstate relationships, as that type of behavior is often short-sighted, *ad hoc* natured, and concerned with material consequences, not contributing to the needs of the society and to the states in their mutual relationships (Christol 2004, 13; Malone and Khong 2003, 425). Ernst Haas declares that the crisis of multilateralism in the world order today has been caused by a systematic neglect by the US of the United Nations. Haas claims that as the US realized that they no longer held the absolute might in the UN relative to other actors within the system, the unilateralist-interventionist tradition quickly reasserted itself in the US government (Haas 1990, 179).

If regarded as unacceptable, why then does unilateralist behavior exist? The hypothesis is that in an increasingly multilateral and interconnected world the US shows signs of rapidly escalating unilateralism. David Malone and Yuen Foong Khong (2003) state three factors that contribute to the US preference of resorting to unilateral behavior:

“The power position of the United States; the domestic political processes and institutions of the United States; and US exceptionalism” (2003, 424). I agree with this in so far as I have already acknowledged the power position of the US in the beginning of the thesis, I have chosen my empirical research materials from domestic political field for the reason that I believe the domestic political system most heavily influences the US foreign policy decisions, and the exceptionalism I will address at a later point.

Such a policy may alienate a country from its allies, in as much as to harm other aspects of power, for example in the economic field. This has not slowed down the United States. One fairly recent clash between the usage of unilateralism versus multilateralism occurred in the case of the Security Council debate over the validity of posing sanctions towards the country of Iraq on the basis of harboring weapons of mass destruction, and consequently on declaring war against the country. The United States finally decided to act on its own, without the consent of the UN, and without a resolution and support from the Security Council. Legitimacy was then based on former, existing SC resolutions, and again, the country's right to self-defense (Ryan 2006, 177-179). Lebow argues that ironically enough the US has manifested unilateralism in cases where many American scholars thought it was not in the national interest of the country, namely in the case of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and negotiations regarding the policy towards Iran (2010, 72).

As is already evidenced here, the theoretical difference between the US and the UN is quite wide, and sparks completely different kind of behavior. How then are the liberal internationalists and the neorealists to get along? It is certain that international organizations overall manage to achieve fewer and smaller goals than independent states acting unilaterally, but could it be said that all that is achieved by multilateral means counts towards a more lasting and secure future for all?

7 SELECTION OF EMPIRICAL MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

"The critical ontology of ourselves has to be considered not, certainly, as a theory, a doctrine, nor even as a permanent body of knowledge that is accumulating; it has to be conceived as an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them" (Michael Foucault 1984, 50).

As the process of attempting to understand behavior naturally yields to subjective, interpretive methods instead of scientifically measurable quantitative methods, this thesis will be constructed through qualitative critical analysis of written materials, using the method of discourse analysis. In this thesis the concept of discourse is understood as "a specific series of representations and practices through which meanings are produced, identities constituted, social relations established, and political and ethical outcomes made more or less possible" (Campbell 2010, 226).

The aim is not to generate new objective knowledge, but instead what follows is a subjective interpretation of the situation under study. The researcher's position remains rationalist/realist, with a necessary hint of idealizing a world as it 'ought' to be, instead of how it is now, with an attempt to understand actions taken by units, instead of just explaining acts.

Post-structuralism will be used as an approach to study social relations¹¹, as it concentrates on the relationship between power and identity in a subjective, and performative linguistic manner (Campbell 2010, 226-229). Viewing "politics as a dynamic creative activity in which actors have no choice other than, through the artful use of political terms and concepts, to convince themselves and others of the utility, truth or virtue of their perspective: a classical, agonistic, conception" (Finlayson 2004), the hope is to have understood something of how things have been in the recent past, and in light of this to be able to give one possible account of how things may shape up to be in the near future.

¹¹ And not as a theory of International Relations in itself (Campbell 2010, 216).

The first hand empirical materials selected for this study include the official speeches of the key players. Namely, I will provide a reading of the four State of the Union addresses¹² both presidents have given to the nation. In addition to the fact that the performance of this speech is written in the Constitution, the State of the Union speech has risen to represent the most important policy blueprint of the US administration in power. The speech is televised nationally and quoted excessively around the globe afterward, and as it always occurs in January, creates images of what to expect from the administration in the coming year.

The study of rhetoric in this thesis is understood as “the ways in which fundamental principles and ideas are formulated, expressed and then developed in argumentative action” (Finlayson 2004, 540). Out of the rhetoric of these speeches will rise the main discourses to be used in this study. Next, I will move on to read remarks by the Presidents' Secretaries of State, who are the *de facto* foreign ministers of the country. It remains to be seen if their remarks confirm the discourses of the Presidents. At appropriate moments other official texts will be reviewed, and the discourses will be backed up by readings of academic authors in the field.

After all the rhetoric, in chapter 9, I will look at actual foreign policy decisions made during both presidential terms. This includes reading the most important foreign and security-political publications the White House releases, the National Security Strategies (NSS) of both Presidential administrations, speeches and statements by the Ambassadors to the UN, as well as other official moves made by the Presidents. In the conclusion, it will be decided whether or not the foreign policy paradigm has changed or remained the same overall and specifically if any changes in the attitude towards the UN during the first Obama administration appear.

¹² State of the Union Address is a yearly speech given by the President of the United States to the Congress: “He shall from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union”. Stated in the Constitution of the United States, Article II Section 3.

8 PRESIDENTIAL DISCOURSES REVEALED THROUGH READING OF THE STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESSES

"In the American case the identity has a particular character. This nationalist identity has been organized historically around powerful and enduring conceptions of America's exceptional character and universalist mission in the world. Based on a mix of historical fact and cultural mythology, American nationalism is periodically aroused in the form of a crusading spirit to remake the world" (Daniel Wirls 2010, 12).

In this chapter I will use discourse theoretical methods to provide a close reading of the rhetoric of the two presidents discussed in this paper. I will begin by going through President Bush's second term speeches from 2005 to 2008, and formulate his main discourses by using concepts and terminology created by Ernesto Laclau and other discourse theorists. The same will then be done for president Obama's first term speeches from 2009 to 2012. In addition to identifying their own discourses that have guided policy-making and formulation, I will identify some common discourses that show through in the rhetoric of both presidents. This is followed by a brief analysis of the usage of these discourses in the presidential foreign policy-making. In order to be able to form a more educated analysis I will move on to read speeches and rhetoric of the presidents' Secretaries of State, namely Ms. Condoleezza Rice and Mrs. Hillary Clinton, which will either confirm or negate the initial discourses of the presidents.

8.1 Unilateral Bush and the discourse of danger

President Bush starts off his first second term speech in 2005 rather mildly and respectfully, by using phrases such as "great privilege" and "we must be good stewards". In the beginning he addresses domestic problems and achievements, emphasizing positive concepts such as "liberty, compassion, and freedom for all Americans". The last three pages of the speech are about the American mission abroad, and especially in the Middle East. Bush talks about terrorism, friends and allies, liberty, and freedom again. The UN is mentioned in the speech once, when Bush refers to the UN having helped the US with arrangement of elections in Iraq. Other countries of the

world (aside from Middle Eastern countries) are not mentioned. The tone is rather respectful to the end, and Bush attempts to make clear that the United States is not imposing anything on others, but merely protecting its own peace and security by operating abroad: “Our aim is to build and preserve a community of free and independent nations, with governments that answer to their citizens and reflect their own cultures. And because democracies respect their own people and their neighbors, the advance of freedom will lead to peace. “

In the 2006 speech, a dramatic change has occurred. The tone of the president is more direct (“we seek the end of tyranny in our world”), more aggressive (“we remain on the offensive against terror networks. We have killed or captured many of their leaders. And for the others, their day will come.”) and could be described as preaching rather than speaking. At some point Bush's rhetoric gets close to plain war-mongering. Bush goes on for the first half of the speech about the war on terror in the Middle East. At one point he even directly addresses his words to the citizens of Iran. This is not a speech about the State of the Union, but about the State of the War. Bush talks about “fighting, being on the offensive, striking, and killing”. The tone of not imposing anything on others has changed into America actively promoting democracy in the Middle East¹³. At some point Bush even says directly that the country is in the middle of a long war against an enemy, whoever that enemy may be.

Bush does not mention the UN once. Only two other countries aside from the Middle Eastern countries, China and India, are mentioned, and their economic growth is described as a threat and fear to the US. God and religion is mentioned multiple times. The last four pages are finally directed towards the citizens, but the preaching tone continues. This is evidenced by the fact that Bush begins all paragraphs with the same repeated sentence, such as: “Keeping America competitive”...and “A hopeful society”... Religion is referred to by Bush stating that the country has been called into this current role, and the country did nothing to invite this mission. Divine destiny is hinted at.

¹³ The 2006 National Security Strategy (NSS) of the United States claimed that “it is the policy of the United States to seek and support democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world”. March 2006, www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/nss2006.pdf.

The 2007 speech begins moderately again, with President Bush addressing the American citizens, and positively discussing the domestic political reality. Bush begins almost all paragraphs in the first three pages with the sentence: "A future of hope and opportunity..." He stresses bipartisan cooperation and working together towards a better future for the Americans. On page four he turns towards foreign policy, again in the Middle East. He starts off gently, reminding Americans how the continuing war on terror has helped them, and how Americans can now feel safer within their own borders. Towards the end of page four, Bush begins to gain momentum again and shows harsher language. The word "kill" is spoken three times in one sentence. When discussing the state of the war, Bush first seems apologizing and tired, and lowers himself to the same level with the citizens, stating that he would also like this war to be over.

This is, however, only staging for what is coming next. Bush continues that this war the country is in, is not a war that America intended, but again, was thrust upon it by some divine power. He announces a new strategy for the war on terror, which deploys tens of thousands of new troops to battle. This is a change from previous years when discussion about recalling of troops has prevailed. Bush backs up his decision by stating that this war is not similar to conventional wars fought by the country before, which have lasted a few years and had a decisive beginning and an end, but instead, this is a generational war that will continue long after the current leaders are gone. Bush then continues by asking the Congress to increase the size of the active Army and Marine Corps by 92,000 in the next 5 years, as well as to design and establish a volunteer civilian reserve corps. These are, naturally, huge investments for the country.

After these statements Bush realizes he has been asking for a lot, and begins to soften the ground by changing the subject. For the first time ever in his speeches from 2005 he mentions the United Nations more than in passing, the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), and other countries around the world with whom the US is working together. For the first time in his speeches the words diplomacy and foreign policy are spoken. Bush mentions other international objectives other than Middle East policy. The tone of the speech is still towards listing entities that are helping the US reach its goals, rather than the US being proud of being a member of any international grouping.

Bush ends this part of the speech by stating that America "hears the call", (from whom, is not told) to act abroad because "to whom much is given, much is required". This is, again, the divine destiny of the United States to act the way it does. The last page of the speech, in a new move, is dedicated to personal success stories of ordinary Americans who have acted heroically and with courage. This serves as a reminder to all Americans, that all of the country's acts are a show of strength, generosity, compassion, and character, qualities of which the country of the United States is made of.

The 2008 speech is Bush's last one as the president of the country. One can feel the difference in this speech compared to the previous ones. Bush talks more diplomatically than before; "let us show our fellow Americans that we recognize our responsibilities and are determined to meet them. Let us show them that Republicans and Democrats can compete for votes and cooperate for results at the same time." For the first time he discusses the global role of the country in fighting against common threats. He mentions an international summit that the country will host, and he discusses other international commitments the country is, and will be, a part of. The same rhetoric about fight against terror and enemies prevails. Bush states that the country will stay on the offensive, and will keep fighting this ideological struggle against the dangers threatening the country.

It becomes evident early on that President Bush's main discourse is *danger*, and closely related to that, a discourse of *unilateralism*¹⁴. Bush takes the role of a protector of the nation. His tone of speech is designed to instill fear on the people, and make them believe that if the proposed steps are not taken as directed, something very bad will happen to all of the citizens of the country. This fits with the historical trend in the US politics where the president is expected to take the role of a hero and a primary responsibility of policy formation during a crisis (Maidment and McGrew 1991, 70-72).

Bush describes very carefully many of the horrific acts performed by terrorists, and reminds the people that the only way to defend the country is by offensive, preemptive military policy. This is a constructivist method of giving meaning to threats, identity,

¹⁴ One should acknowledge that not all Republicans in the US presidential history can be called unilateralists, and neither can all Democrats be seen as firm believers in multilateralism (Malone 2003, 28).

and human suffering in claiming legitimacy for the reasons leaders give for their actions (Fierke 2010, 192). Bush's rhetoric implies that his goal is not to be a friend with whom one is able to negotiate, but instead an authoritative figure whose political choices must be seen as inevitable, inescapable, and crucial for the survival of the nation, and they are not to be questioned.

To put President Bush's speeches in perspective, it should be remembered that in 2005 the country was already at a state of war. During Bush's first term the nation suffered the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, and this served as a catachrestic moment for the president (Buckley and Singh 2006, 14). He was in a position to act, in fact, it was required that he act at the moment of crisis, and out of the variety of choices he had at his disposal, he chose to create the Bush Doctrine¹⁵; he begun the Global War on Terror (GWOT) (Wiris 2010, 2-3). In fact President Bush created something that had not existed before, and that gave him freedom to act in ways that would not have been tolerated prior to 9/11.

According to post-structural analysis the movement from one paradigm to another at a time of crisis must involve a political judgment by the actors by which to understand the crisis and formulate responses (Finlayson 2004, 534). That catachrestical move carried President Bush on to his second term, and much of his energy during that term was invested in keeping that momentum going. Emilia Palonen describes this type of usage of catachresis as Laclauian, where one names the not before named, or gives a name to some new phenomena (2010, 7). Daniel Wiris describes the GWOT as an "ideological, political and fiscal equivalent" of another Cold War (2010, 3). This was a war to be fought against terrorism anywhere, and against anyone if needed, much in the same way as had been done when fighting against communism during the Cold War, and this was largely a result of how the Bush administration interpreted the 9/11 attacks to the public (ibid., 128).

¹⁵ Even though President Bush and the main figures in his administration have never publicly referred to the Bush Doctrine, the so-called new foreign policy doctrine after the 9/11 attacks, formulated by the presidency and released in the National Security Strategy (NSS) of September 2002, has been called that by public leaders and academic authors worldwide. The NSS describes the four pillars of the doctrine as: "The maintenance of American military primacy; the embrace of preventive war as a supplement to traditional deterrence; the war on terrorism; and democratization". (Buckley and Singh 2006, 3-4).

According to Malone, Bush's bold rhetoric from his first term indicated a policy of “assertive unilateralism” or “multilateralism *à la carte*” (2003, 31), and that seemed to continue during his second term. Bush's rhetoric can be called bold also in a sense that he is able to assure those who promote his policies, and completely anger those who are opposed to his policies. It has to be acknowledged also, that President Bush was serving his second term, and was not going to be running for president anymore. This may very well have influenced his rhetoric as he was freed from the constraints of collecting votes to keep his job. Still, it is my view that Bush's rhetoric was bolder and more aggressive at the beginning of his term, when he was still (theoretically) in danger of facing impeachment mid-term, and his last speech was the most diplomatic ever even though he was leaving the post at that time.

During Bush's second term, which this study analyzes, the Global War on Terror served as the empty signifier, under which umbrella the president was able to sweep any and all of his policy decisions. There was not one soul who would resist or protest, since the GWOT was inevitable, and it protected the nation from all evils. Wirls claims that the public slowly learned that the GWOT was not so much about Osama bin Laden, Al Qaeda, Afghanistan, or even Iraq, as it was about unprecedented military buildup, global superiority and domination (2010, 168). This is a clear example of a Laclauian usage of an empty signifier, described as a signifier without a signified (Laclau 1996). The signifier in itself is not empty, but in the process of gaining significance and in creating unity among various groups within the society, the signifier overflows with meaning and thus is emptied out of the original purpose (Palonen 2008).

Bush uses many terms as floating signifiers: Hope, because there has to be light at the end of the tunnel that is shown to the people from time to time; religion, because there is no other way than God's way of showing what the country should do at any moment; and opportunity, which is needed to defend the nation's policies, because an opportunity of an offensive strike will create opportunities of freedom, safety, power, and strength. A floating signifier is described by Palonen as a nodal point of which there appears to be a struggle, or competition, for dominance (2008).

8.2 Multilateral Obama and the discourse of responsible leadership

I will now move on to the analysis of the next administration. In 2009 Barack Obama is new in office and holds his first State of the Union speech. He is firm (“the impact of this recession is real, and it is everywhere”), enthusiastic (“we will rebuild, we will recover, and the United States of America will emerge stronger than before”), and aggressive (“the weight of this crisis will not determine the destiny of this Nation”) to get started with new programs at home. Out of the eight pages of speech, he speaks of domestic issues, and mainly economy, for seven pages. He looks back and places some blame on the previous decisions made (“this administration is moving swiftly and aggressively to break this destructive cycle”), but he does not name names and he is diplomatic enough not to stir criticism. One always inherits the previous president's legacy, and work has to begin from that platform. Obama's style is firm and he often repeats a sentence at the end of a paragraph to leave a stronger impact.

Obama's only remarks about international affairs and foreign policy concern the war in Iraq, and he states how he will end the war swiftly; “I'm now carefully reviewing our policies in both wars, and I will soon announce a way forward in Iraq that leaves Iraq to its people and responsibly ends this war”. He mentions how the country will work together with the G-20 group to work on global economy. The G-20 is a new term that President Bush never used. Obama does not mention the UN once. He does introduce another new term, “extremism”, which he often uses instead of terrorism, but other than that, his rhetoric about foreign policy is very similar to Bush's before, talking about friends and allies. His words are maybe a bit more diplomatic, and he states that the US has a responsibility to lead, explaining how this burden, and privilege, has been trusted upon the nation, and how the whole world expects the US to lead the world to a better future. He also mentions, briefly in passing, that his budget will increase military spending in the coming year.

In 2010 Obama continues with the same lines. From now on the speeches are a record length of ten pages, and again this one contains only one page of foreign policy. Obama discusses, similar to the year before, the important term of deficit of trust that has to be

restored in the government and within the nation, and he attempts to appeal to bipartisan politics in this time of difficulties. Obama is firm about America's leadership, and he is rather aggressive about the country remaining on top of the game internationally: "I do not accept second place for the United States of America". He mentions other countries, and states that there is no reason they should get ahead of the United States globally. In that one page of foreign policy, the UN is not mentioned. Obama repeats last year's pledge for the war to be ending soon, and the country working with friends and allies and the G-20 group in the future.

As he attempts to rid the image of America at war in Iraq from the minds of the citizens, Obama mentions that national security spending will not be cut or affected in the near future, even though many other programs will. Also, Obama admits that the one uniting factor across partisan politics as well as among the nation's citizens throughout the decades has been security. As the momentum on the war in Iraq is waning, he proceeds to introduce to the surface a new threat, or danger, from abroad, namely the nuclear arms proliferation. He promises that America will lead in the fight against nuclear weapons at the hands of terrorists, because it is America's destiny to lead all people to freedom. His rhetoric remains similar to the year before, and now he sometimes repeats sentences three times at the end of paragraphs.

The overwhelming theme of the 2011 speech is winning the future! Obama takes the role of an innovator, a great motivator, and uses inspiring words to awaken the nation: "We need to out-innovate, out-educate, and out-build the rest of the world. We have to make America the best place on Earth to do business." It is not specified at any point what competition the country is currently in, however, the race must be won by America, because America is the greatest nation on Earth, and nobody would like to live anywhere else in the world. Of course he only compares his great nation to the dictatorial regimes of the Middle East and not to other democratic Western countries for example.

Out of ten pages again, only one page touches upon foreign policy. UN is not mentioned, NATO is mentioned once. Obama keeps the tone light and positive, and

again confirms that the war in Iraq is ending, and now even defense spending will be cut in the next budget. He continuously repeats that America has restored its leadership role globally, without showing any concrete examples of that, and by hard work and endurance of the American people, "the future is ours to be won".

The 2012 speech is the last of Obama's first administration. Its overwhelming theme is teamwork at home, and America standing together as one nation. By uniting its forces the country will remain the greatest, indispensable, country on Earth. Obama starts impressively by announcing that the last of the troops have come home from Iraq, and that the war is over. He then moves on to innovate the citizens regarding domestic issues for eight pages, and comes back to foreign affairs on page nine for the length of one page total. He discusses Middle Eastern politics and states that the war on Afghanistan is also drawing to an end and some troops have already returned. With these victories, Obama continues the same old rhetoric of stating that the country has gained a position of strength and power, and is ready to fight new enemies with new energy. He also says that he is committed to keeping the American military the greatest in the world, and that the freedom of American people can only be maintained through the service of the superior troops.

Obama touches upon the matter of diplomacy once, when stating that with American leadership and diplomacy, the world now stands united against the threat of Iran. He also mentions that a peaceful end for the conflict with Iran is still possible and hopeful. The UN or other international entities are not mentioned. Without pausing to give examples, Obama preaches that "the renewal of American leadership can be felt across the globe", and let no-one tell you otherwise. He mentions another new emerging danger (aside from Iran) that he is prepared to fight against, and that is cyber threats.

Obama continues to discuss the deficit of trust within the country, and this time he goes much further, stating that "Washington is broken". He stresses bipartisan cooperation, and even admits that the executive branch is in need of reform. The message is that only with cooperation and playing as one team, can the country fix itself, and will remain strong in the international arena as well. Overall, Obama's tone of his speech is more

peer-like compared to Bush's authoritarian tone. Obama includes many more individual survival and success stories than Bush ever did, and places himself at the same level with an ordinary citizen more naturally than President Bush did. Compared to Bush, Obama's rhetoric cannot be called bold in the same sense. Because he talks at length in fluent language, there remains, at the end, certain vagueness and one may not say with confidence what his position towards different issue areas is. In other words, Obama's style is more diplomatic.

What is interesting to note, is that every year President Bush talked about finding new energy sources and becoming less dependent on foreign oil imports. In President Obama's first speech in 2009 he says that the country imports more oil now than ever before. Every year Bush talked about cutting the deficit and creating a surplus. In 2009 Obama says the country inherited a trillion-dollar deficit, a financial crisis, and a costly recession. For four years in a row Bush praised his education acts, and then Obama comes in and states that: "We have one of the highest high school dropout rates of any industrialized nation, and half of the students who begin college never finish. This is a prescription for economic decline, because we know the countries that out-teach us today will outcompete us tomorrow." This shows that words may say something, but action does not necessarily follow.

My reading of Obama's speeches raises a discourse of *responsible leadership*, closely related to *multilateral* discourse. One gets the feeling that President Bush may have been slacking off in some of his work, and now it is Obama's time to step in and take charge. He shows leadership, but it is responsible leadership and covers all areas of society domestically and abroad. His tone is positive, innovative, and he shows firmness and promises a better future for the Americans if following his leadership. It has to be kept in mind that a new president always inherits the work of the previous president, and substantial elements of prevailing doctrines and policies are likely to remain in place for a period of time (Buckley and Singh 2006, 13).

Here one can apply Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's later work, in which they distinguish between antagonism and dislocation when discussing identity and the "us"

versus "the others" layout. With his more positive tone and open-minded outlook, Obama's rhetoric creates an open space to think about the others as not merely enemies, but as adversaries, who have the right to exist alongside us and have to be tolerated (Mouffe 2005,4). Mouffe argues, moreover, that; "modern democracy's specificity lies in the recognition and legitimation of conflict, and in the refusal to suppress it by imposing an authoritarian order" (Norval 2000, 230). Even though Bush claimed to be acting in the name of democracy in his foreign policy decisions, it is exactly the imposition of an authority when one country enters another one and changes the regime by force (Fierke 2010, 193).

To put Obama's speeches in perspective, at the moment he took office, the country had been fighting a long and costly war for years, and the nation was in a bad economic recession. It is thus quite natural that he discusses the state of the domestic politics much more than he does international politics. Therefore, Obama's empty signifier is change. This is a concept he created already during his presidential election campaign, and now he has been able to put it in practice. One can take almost any policy, decision, or opinion of President Bush and President Obama is ready to change it into something completely different. As floating signifiers Obama uses different issue areas where he is to show leadership and change. These include economic revival, scientific and technological innovation, responsible use of power, defensive use of military force, etc. These issue areas can be raised to the top of the agenda on a rotating basis depending on the state of the nation, and of the world.

Obama's rhetoric can be described as Skinnerian paradiastole, which Palonen describes as "a redescriptive political change, achieved by changing the normative content of a concept" (2010,7). Obama is not attempting to create anything new, but instead he is collecting the ashes from previous fires burned, and remaking something out of the existing conditions. This Skinnerian technique involves replacing an existing term with a new description with which one seeks to persuade his audience to accept a new attitude, and in this case, a policy, towards the action at hand (Palonen 2010, 16). This is evident in Obama's rhetoric where he is purposefully articulating new words when speaking about the same issues, such as 'extremists' instead of 'terrorists' used by Bush,

and by this he is attempting to appeal to the audience to place new moral values on existing concepts and policies.

Compared to the Laclauian way of articulating fixity in politics, used by President Bush, Skinner argues for the possibility to escape fixity when articulating politics, as is evident in Obama's rhetoric. According to Skinner one should be aware of looking at things only in one hegemonic way, and instead be equipped with a broader sense of possibility, in looking back at the commitments inherited and in planning the course ahead for the future (Palonen 2010, 12). President Obama can be seen as acting in this manner, at least in his rhetoric.

The mere fact that President Obama does not use the term Global War on Terror, can be seen as signaling a significant change in his attitude towards international law. The term war is an internationally used rule bound concept that involves certain normative behavior, whereas terrorism has been associated with non-state actors outside of the area of justice. By combining these two terms together President Bush was able to reason acts that would not have been considered acceptable otherwise. (Fierke 2010, 191.) Another interpretation could be that by not using the term GWOT, President Obama merely wants to distinguish himself from President Bush, even though he may feel the same way as Bush did towards international law. This can be determined only after reviewing Obama's concrete political moves, but is nonetheless an indication of the power the speaker has when attempting to put certain images to the minds of the listeners.

This process seems natural when considering the political culture in the United States, where the presidents come from the opposing political parties. What one president has spent four to eight years to implement only has to come to its dissolution as soon as a new president steps in, if he happens to represent the other half of the population and sees other practices to better serve the nation. Whether or not this is the most productive way to practice politics in a nation-state is questionable. It has been acknowledged by academics that the American system of Separation of Powers may be ill-suited for conducting foreign affairs (Maidment and McGrew 1991, 141). Obama may be seen as

practicing politics in Mouffean way as well, where the process is always more important, the means to getting somewhere are more important than the goals, since no goal is ever complete and definite in politics that is ever-changing (Palonen 2008, 228).

8.3 Security as a myth: from deterrence to dissuasion

Next comes the task of identifying some common elements in both of the presidents' speeches. Myths in discourse theory can be described as extremely important nodal points, with more than normal amount of connections. A myth maintains the structure of the community, and it is something everyone refers to when discussing the elements that glue the discourse together. A myth may transform into an imaginary, meaning that its importance is hardly ever contested and it is taken for granted when discussing its role within a discursive horizon (Norval 2000, 226). Both Presidents Bush and Obama in their speeches refer continuously to the same myth of *security* as the most important element of national unity.

Every decision made is to increase security of the country and its citizens. Both presidents seem to agree on this. For someone having been as against the GWOT since the beginning as president Obama was, it is still quite unsettling how Obama never rallied for, nor publicly declared, to gap the military spending of the nation (Wiris 2010, 192). This shows that even though Obama was ready to end the active wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, he remained firm, like President Bush, that the country should keep its focus on security issues.

Here I am claiming that even though it is natural for all independent states to care for their security, and hold that concept as one of the most important ones in domestic and foreign policies, the case of the US can still be described as somewhat different. It is clear that the United States today places a strong importance on the definition of security and hard power, holding an absolute majority of military power in the world. At the same time, in a stark contrast, many international entities have begun to place more and more importance on the definition and values of soft power. According to academics there is no question that the US will keep concentrating on security and

military politics even if it comes with a very high political cost (Wallerstein 1995, 200), and there is no reason to believe that the American military primacy will face any serious challenges in the near future (Singh 2006, 25).

As I mentioned in my reading of the official statements, the constant articulation of danger was present in all speeches, but in slightly different manners. The way in which president Bush described danger was to directly persuade the audience to comply with his policies. President Obama also mentioned many kinds of dangers, some of them, such as the cyber threats, even if as in passing, without really pausing and explaining the depth of that danger to the audience. This raises a question of how imminent and valid that threat actually is, and why was it mentioned at all? Campbell claims that keeping danger continuously alive in foreign policy articulation can be viewed as "not a threat to a state's identity or existence", but instead, it is "its condition of possibility" (1992, 13). This implies that keeping danger alive actually strengthens the identity and national unity of the state, regardless of the real status of the threat.

The concept of dissuasion, an official policy launched during president Bush's first term, and continuing into his second term, is a clear and concrete example of the way in which the US government at the time perceived itself, and also a show of how the US wanted others to view it. The Quadrennial Defense Review released in September 2001 introduced four key goals of the country's defense strategy: "Assuring allies and friends; dissuading future military competition; deterring threats and coercion against U.S. interests; and if deterrence fails, decisively defeating any adversary" (Wirls 2010, 101). As Wirls interprets this report, the other three goals cannot be viewed as new or radical ideas, however, the concept of dissuasion was new and a rather bold move from the government.

The policy of dissuasion means taking a step further from traditional deterrence. It aims at no adversary attempting to ever even consider competing with the United States in military build-up. According to Wirls "this doctrine transcended what was always the general idea that the United States would try to maintain some degree of superiority" (2010, 104). In Wirls' opinion the policy of dissuasion was quite irrelevant as the

country was, in 2001, already so far ahead of other countries in military capabilities. Through the reading of president Obama's speeches, one can see that the concept of dissuasion has been transformed into "leading by example" during his administration¹⁶.

While it seems somewhat natural that the standing global hegemon has the strongest military capabilities, there are many different ways in which that power may be put to use. A question that has recently concerned authors and media has to do with ethics. If one country has the means, can it use those means to achieve whatever ends? Is it ethically correct to build up its military capabilities while at the same time restricting the rights of others to do so, referring for example to the nuclear capabilities of states. This ethical dimension missing from the conceptualization of hegemony by Laclau and Mouffe should be brought into the discussion of political leadership (Norval 2000, 231).

8.4 The frontier of freedom and liberty

Continuing with the rhetorical similarities, both presidents identify the same limits for their discourses, namely, us versus them, also often referred to by the presidents by using the terms friends versus enemies. Nobody and no entity can belong to any other category than these two. You are either with us, or against us (Singh 2006, 17; Fierke 2010, 187). The presidents refer to terrorists, as well as people following other ideologies, as the 'others' in this study. According to Laclau, limits combine elements but they require that something that is not included exists. And when that something that is not included, is named, a frontier appears (Palonen 2008, 217). Politics only occur at the frontier created by these limits.

The creation of political frontiers is a common practice in discourse theory, stemming from Laclau and Mouffe. They argue that it is common that in the presence of a frontier, an enemy is constructed (Norval 2000). The 'us' has to be protected by all means from 'them' coming from the outside. All this transforms into an overbearing imaginary shared by both of the presidents and present in all discourses discussed here, namely,

¹⁶ From Bush's "dissuading, deterring, and defeating" to Obama's "disrupt, dismantle, and defeat" (National Security Strategy 2010) accessed via http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf.

freedom and liberty of all people. Obama articulates this by: “America must always stand on the side of freedom” (2010), and “our freedom endures because of the men and women in uniform who defend it” (2012). This sentence also strengthens the link between security and freedom, as does the following by Bush: “We will pass along to our children all the freedoms we enjoy, and chief among them is freedom from fear” (2005). Even though frontiers appear paratactic in nature, it does not imply that they are permanent and unchangeable. Imaginaries should be considered as a result of a process at work in a society. In any given society there may be multiple imaginaries at work, and they may also be challenged rather easily (Norval 2000, 226).

8.5 If you are American, you are exceptional!

In addition to the individual discourses identified above, as well as the common overarching elements present in all discourses, there is one powerful discourse that applies to both administrations. That is the discourse on *American exceptionalism*. Both of these presidents share the view of their nation being somehow, and for some reason, unique and special, and above everyone else. There is no doubt that both administrations, with using different methods in getting there, maybe, aim towards the same goal, which is to remain as the sole superpower, a unipolar hegemon of the world, and to be able to shape the international arena as they see fit. This exceptionalist theory is widely acknowledged by academics in the field (Malone and Khong 2003), and even though it was expected to rise in the presidential speech, I was surprised how strongly it was articulated by both of the Presidents.

The exceptionalist nature of the nation is articulated in the speeches by stating that the real power and strength behind the nation does not ultimately lie in its material or diplomatic capabilities, but within the inherent spirit and determination, passion and courage of the people. Bush begins by stating that: “To whom much is given, much is required. We hear the call to take on the challenges” (2007) and: “The secret of our strength, the miracle of America is that our greatness lies not in our Government, but in the spirit and determination of our people” (2008). Obama continues: “There is no force in the world more powerful than the example of America” (2009) and: “America

remains the one indispensable nation in world affairs, and as long as I'm President, I intend to keep it that way" (2012). Another way of approaching the exceptionalist nature of the country, which both Presidents do, is to speak about the mission, and task handed to the nation, and its destiny to do what is ultimately the right thing.

In post-structuralist discourse analysis the ontological starting point is "a conceptualization of policy as always dependent upon the articulation of identity, while identity is simultaneously produced and reproduced through the formulation and legitimation of policy" (Hansen 2006, 211). This implies that if policies change, some change should have occurred in the formation of identity as well. But if the claim here is that the identity has remained the same during the two presidential terms, does that then imply that no real change has occurred in the policy-making? This is to be determined in this study. The discourse of exceptionalism in this study fulfills a critical component of post-structural analysis, that of which may be called critical historical analysis, or genealogy, and which is used as a tool to interpret the present by looking at the culture and history of the relevant actors (Hansen 2006, 212).

Campbell continues by describing the current situation in the US as follows: "Its status as the sovereign presence in world politics is produced by 'a discourse of primary and stable identity' (1992,10). This means that the stronger unity the country possesses domestically, the stronger the country appears to the international community. Moreover, Campbell claims that: "The identity of a 'people' is the basis for the legitimacy of the state and its subsequent practices" (1992,11). This can be interpreted in a way that the greatest threat to the US hegemony will, after all, come from within, and the future of the country will depend on the way in which Americans view themselves in relation to other people (Singh 2006, 28). Comparing Campbell's analysis of the US to the EU countries, for example, shows that freeing oneself from the constant articulation of danger changes one's attitude towards nationalism, and leaves room to identify oneself in multiple ways.

8.6 Analysis of the usage of presidential discourses in foreign policy-making

What then, do these discourses mean in terms of changes and continuity in the United States foreign policy? Does the fact that President Bush spent more time discussing foreign affairs, and that he mentioned the United Nations more often than his follower, mean that he cares more about foreign relations than does president Obama? Not necessarily. During the second Bush term, the nation was at war in several locations around the globe, so it is only natural that he spent time discussing that issue. He also had been criticized during his first term of his ambivalent policy towards the UN and other international organizations (Buckley and Singh 2006, 15; Patrick 2010), and thus during his second term speeches he may have been aiming to correct that image and made sure to include them in his speeches.

Moreover, does the fact that president Obama spent a considerable amount less time discussing foreign policy and international relations as did his predecessor, and the fact that he does not mention the United Nations once during his speeches spread over a four-year period, mean that he does not care about that organization or the relations with other countries? Not necessarily. However, I was truly surprised by the dominance of domestic political issues in President Obama's speeches. It has to be kept in mind that during the Obama administration the nation was struggling in the midst of an economic recession and thus it is only natural that he concentrates on domestic issues. He may also have understood that people at home were tired of hearing about the war, and made a rhetorical move not to talk about it more than absolutely necessary.

If he does not mention international organizations, he does not disqualify them either, and Obama does mention a few global areas in which he has shown responsible, multilateral leadership. These are the diplomatic negotiations regarding the situation with Iran, as well as working together with the G-20 group, for example. One interpretation may also be that since Obama considers the relationship between the United States and the United Nations as being solid and on safe turf, he does not see the need to touch that issue now when other problems appear more pressing.

Is it possible to identify some concrete policy changes directly by reading the State of the Union addresses? One has to look further to get more information, that much is certain, but something can be inferred already. We can take the fact that president Obama managed to end the war in Iraq and send all troops home, even though President Bush's policy saw no end in sight for that war he claimed would go on indefinitely, as a definite policy change. Another fact is that president Obama promises to cut the defense budget in the near future. This is the first time ever that may be happening during the eight years discussed in this paper, even on paper. Also the wish of president Obama's to handle the latest Middle Eastern crisis of Iran peacefully and multilaterally by using international diplomacy, shows a change in policy-making towards a more responsible use of power, compared to President Bush.

After the initial work of identifying the main discourses for both administrations, it is time to look for more evidence that would support those discourses and help draw a more educated and intelligent conclusion regarding change and continuity in foreign policy in the US. At this point, the hypothesis is that some change has indeed occurred with the presidential shift. However, as I identified a common discourse for both presidents in the previous section, I must now, in the following chapters, determine that which is stronger: The individual discourses of the presidents representing differences in their identities, ideologies, and fundamental beliefs, which reflect their foreign policy-making, or the common discourse of American exceptionalism standing out as the strongest of all, representing similarities in the presidents, closing the cap on change and celebrating continuity in policy. This I will tackle by reading the remarks of two Secretaries of State, one for each President, and analyzing how their work concurs or differs from the presidential discourses.

8.7 Democratic Rice and the Transformational Diplomacy project

In her Nomination Hearing speech before the US Senate in January 2005, Condoleezza Rice states that the time for diplomacy is now. She starts off by praising President Bush's first term, and confirms that the decisions made have been the right ones, and now more work remains to be done. Rice brings in a lot of personal history and

discusses her qualities as a future Secretary of State. She calls for bipartisan and international cooperation. The overwhelming theme of her speech, however, is the spreading of democracy and freedom all over the world, and the fight against an ideological hatred.

In another speech that same year, after having served as a Secretary of State for a few months, Rice takes a brisker tone and resembles President Bush in her rhetoric. She gets immersed in the horrors of terrorists, and states that there is no backing down right now. She discusses transformation of whole areas of the world, freeing them off tyranny. This transformational rhetoric materializes one year after as Rice's Transformational Diplomacy project, which lays down the reorganization of the foreign service sector, redistributing manpower (civilian as well as military) from more stable areas (friend and ally countries) to more unstable and critical parts of the world, to better and more effectively advance the Bush doctrine (Rice 2005).

8.8 Global Clinton and the Smart Power project

In her Nomination Hearing speech in front of the US Senate some four years after, in January 2009, Senator Hillary Clinton is in her element. Her monologue is double the length of her predecessor's at the same hearing, and she transforms herself into a mother-figure for the entire Earth. It seems as if Clinton was the sole leader of the world, and the audience she is addressing, the people of the United States, was the government of the world, and it was their common job to save the world and lead it into a better future. There is no area of the globe and any threat, problem, or issue-area that she leaves without a mention. America will lead and tackle all of the problems that lie ahead.

Clinton is very convincing, thorough, and she makes many rational remarks. She recognizes that talking about problems such as the environmental threats, is not just philosophy and rhetoric, but it is a reality, and the world needs to act on it now. She understands that the world cannot solve the problems without the US participation, and the US cannot solve them acting alone either. She does remain firm in the capability of

the US to take the lead and direct and persuade the others to follow.

Her remarks lead to the formulation later on that year, after her confirmation to be the Secretary of State, of the Smart Power project. It states that: “Military force may sometimes be necessary to protect our people and our interests. But diplomacy and development will be equally important in creating conditions for a peaceful, stable and prosperous world. That is the essence of smart power – using all the tools at our disposal”¹⁷. In a way this gives more room to new and different ways of exercising power, and frees the government of the previous Bush doctrine, but on the other hand, it does not really provide any new ideas, tools, or techniques that have not existed before. It lists negotiation and persuasion as the preferential tools when dealing with others, but as a close second comes the usage of the military, and only as a third option are international organizations mentioned.

In conclusion, Rice and Clinton in their rhetoric both support unconditionally the discourses advanced by the presidents they serve. Rice uses danger as a means to persuade people to keep fighting the existing wars and to support President Bush in his policies. Clinton is as eager as president Obama to commit to the leadership role they have envisioned for their country. The Secretaries seem even more committed than the presidents to bipartisan political cooperation and multilateral international framework at least in their rhetoric. Both Secretaries also support the American exceptionalism discourse, Rice talking at length about the history of the nation and Clinton assuring the audience that no matter what others say, the moment of the American hegemony is far from over. This is a continuation of a historical trend of praising the exceptionalism of the US. Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright stated in her 1998 speech that “we stand tall and we see further than other countries into the future” (Malone and Khong 2003, 14).

An issue that arises here stems again from the Constitutional democracy. In contrast to parliamentary democracies, where the minister of foreign affairs may represent a

¹⁷ American “Smart Power”: Diplomacy and Development are the Vanguard. Fact sheet by the Bureau of Public Affairs, May 4, 2009.

different political party as the president of the country, in a presidential democracy the president nominates all of his Secretaries and they usually concur to the same views with the president, as long as they are interested in keeping their post. Here one may once again ponder the viability and effectiveness of this type of democracy where discussion and debate is practically muted and the official stance is elaborated by a small group of elites.

9 FROM RHETORIC TO ACTION

*President Obama has pursued national security policies that keep the American people safe, while turning the page on a decade of war and restoring American leadership abroad. Since President Obama took office, the United States has devastated al Qaeda's leadership. Now, thanks to our extraordinary servicemen and women, we have reached a pivotal moment – as we definitively end the war in Iraq and begin to wind down the war in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, we have refocused on a broader set of priorities around the globe that will allow the United States to be safe, strong, and prosperous in the 21st century.*¹⁸

After reviewing the presidential rhetoric, it is necessary to look into the concrete policy changes made by President Obama after he took office in 2009. According to post-structural discourse analysis, policy cannot be deduced from representations directly, nor representations from policy. Instead, both need to be empirically uncovered and linked (Hansen 2006, 214). In so far as ideas can be said to have influence in practice, it has to be measured how effective specific ideas have been in persuading particular people into believing in them (Finlayson 2004, 532). In this chapter it is to be determined whether Obama's changes in rhetoric have translated into changes in foreign policy action. This chapter will concentrate heavily on foreign policy action by President Obama, but will also touch upon President Bush's former decisions. Even though it is not to be expected that everything Obama has articulated has been achieved, some of the promises made in the State of the Union speeches should have been realized in practice, if not for any other reason but the President's own approval ratings and credibility as the leader of the nation.

When moving onto the concrete examples, it has to be acknowledged that other factors come into play, as clearly the President himself does not make all of the decisions for the country. Not all of the President's suggestions ever get to be realized in practice, and no matter how powerful a figure the president is, the whole government is involved in law- and policy-making in a democratic country. Here comes to play the system of the checks and balances by the Constitution, and brings into the picture the US Congress.

¹⁸ Guiding principles of President Obama's Foreign Policy: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/foreign-policy>.

At the end of this chapter the task is to determine which discourse plays the dominant role in the actions of the presidents, compared to their rhetoric.

9.1 Changes in the United States security policy under President Obama

The Constitutional Departments of Defense and State have been challenged, since its creation in 1947, by the National Security Council (NSC) in influencing the President and policy-making, especially in the field of military and foreign policies. The documents released by this bureau and especially the role of the National Security Adviser to the President has grown more and more significant during the recent decades (Maidment and McGrew 1991, 79). That is why this chapter will review critical parts of what is called the most important policy document in the field of foreign and security politics for the country, the National Security Strategies (NSS), for both presidents in this study¹⁹. I will briefly outline the NSS 2006 by the Bush presidency, and then the NSS 2010 by the Obama presidency, and look for changes in policy and the usage of the dominant discourses.

The NSS 2006 is a wartime strategy paper mostly concerned with ending tyranny and spreading freedom and liberty in the world. The paper is a direct continuation of the NSS 2002, (which was released shortly after the September 11, 2001 attacks) listing successes and naming the challenges forward. It has been argued that the most radical part of an otherwise predictable document of NSS 2002 was the statement to act pre-emptively if needed (Ryan 2006, 173). This is confirmed in the 2006 strategy by referring to the inherent right of self-defense by the US. Many pages are afforded to describing terrorism today, vividly teaching the reader a lesson on how the mind of a terrorist works and what one aims to achieve. After getting to know the enemy, the document states what democracy can offer the people after tyranny and terrorism has been defeated.

¹⁹ The usage of these documents is justified by the fact that as one enters the web-page of the White House, and clicks on the Foreign Policy button under Issues, the first link to be presented is for the NSS. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/foreign-policy>.

The NSS 2006 continues to describe genocide, biological, nuclear and chemical weapons, and discuss the dictatorial strategies of Saddam Hussein's regime at length, even though Saddam Hussein had already been toppled at the point of publishing the NSS 2006, and was eliminated later on in the same year. This is a clear usage of the discourse of danger to draw people together. Maybe more than laying out the way ahead, this paper dwells on the past decisions. It affords the minimum amount of space possible for the UN. It may be concluded that this document follows President Bush's discourses on danger as well as unilateralism.

The NSS of 2010, in a stark contrast to its predecessor, is a lesson in multilateral engagement, responsible moral leadership and strategies to succeed. It takes moral responsibility as a groundbreaker in world politics and promises to lead by example. It acknowledges the rocks in the road in the relationship with the UN in the past, and commits to strengthen the organization from within. This is no longer a strategy document of wartime, but a fresh start on how to move on from the past and to tackle new challenges. The language is more positive in tone and the strategies are directed towards a broad range of interests the nation has and will pursue.

The great security-political achievements by the first Barack administration include the successful ending of the war in Iraq, and the elimination of al Qaeda's Osama bin Laden²⁰. Even though the former achievement boosted Obama's profile considerably, and represents a change from Bush's policy, the latter decision has received much criticism as it was another show of the US unilateral military action (Aaltola and Saloniemi-Pasternak 2012, 7). The NSS 2010 makes a strong commitment to non-proliferation globally as well as to reducing the US nuclear arsenal. The document also prohibits the use of torture without exceptions.

Even though many steps have been taken towards comprehensive reform efforts by the Obama administration, it is clear that contradictions still remain in the rhetoric and concrete policies of the government. Obama has stated that power is no longer a zero-sum game, and we live in a world of security-interdependence (Patrick 2010). But still,

²⁰ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/foreign-policy>

“the United States must reserve the right to act unilaterally if necessary to defend our nation and our interests” (NSS 2010). President Obama has acknowledged that the US cannot solve the global problems alone. “As a practical matter, of course, the United States accepts “a little less sovereignty” every day, often choosing to pool some sovereign functions with other nations or to voluntarily accept restrictions on its policy autonomy in order to cope with deepening economic and security interdependence.” (Patrick 2010). “And yet it remains political suicide for any US aspirant to elective office to speak of moving “beyond sovereignty”—or indeed to speak the language of “global governance”—given the undercurrent of suspicion that international institutions are running roughshod over the US Constitution.” (Patrick 2010).

And that this President has not done either. The strongest discourses at work here are the discourse of responsible leadership, multilateralism without the neglect of unilateralism as a viable option, and American exceptionalism. This is confirmed by the White house: “To advance America’s national security, the President is committed to using all elements of American power, including the strength of America’s values.”²¹

9.2 Changes in the United States foreign policy towards the United Nations

The United States Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Susan Rice, remarks in her speech in August 2009 that the country is dramatically changing its approach towards the UN. She promises strong leadership in facing global challenges, but also stresses the need to persuade others to join in the pursuit. In that task she recognizes that the US must lead by example, admit its own mistakes and take responsibility for them, and treat others with respect. Mirroring Obama, Rice admits that in today's world American interests converge with the interests of others, and national security of one country cannot be played by a zero-sum game anymore. In recognizing this the US will increase other countries' willingness to cooperate with the US on the issues most vital to it.

²¹ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/foreign-policy>

This is a clear sign that the Obama administration has changed the course in UN policy, from President Bush's strategy of boycotting and withdrawal, to addressing problems hands on, taking part and making change occur as needed. An example of this is the recent US re-participation in the UN Human Rights council (Jones and Gowan 2009). Ambassador Rice states that the Obama administration acknowledges that engagement may be imperfect, requires hard work, and yields slow results, but isolation would simply mean giving up completely. The US is now concentrating on elaborating what it stands for, not what it stands against. In 2009 the Obama administration cleared all of the arrears to the UN that had accumulated during the years of 2005-2008. The 2010 budget of the US also requested that the country will keep paying its UN dues on time in the future, and stop the historical trend of paying its dues regularly almost a year late, a tradition that has been followed since the 1980's. (Rice, S. 2009).

Ambassador Joseph Torsella, the US Representative for UN Management and Reform, spells out the latest US policy regarding the UN reform, in a speech at the Council on Foreign Relations, in January 2012. The key words rising from that speech involve making the UN more accountable, efficient, effective, and respected. Torsella assures the audience that the US believes in multilateral diplomacy, and in a strong UN that is critical to US national security. The first priority is cutting the UN budget, and this the US has already achieved. The US wants to make sure it is not paying for anything that does not bring back results. The next task is accountability. Here the Ambassador regularly states that the US will lead reform by example, giving concrete examples on how the US government has acted domestically to provide greater accountability to the public.

Torsella then moves on to admit, that the US hasn't always practiced what it is preaching, and confirms that the US reform leadership at the UN and elsewhere in the international arena is stronger when committing to the same standards they urge on others. This kind of talk is acceptance, acknowledgement of own position, and indicates a change in attitude. This type of self-searching is the imperative first step when real change is wanted. However, when Torsella states that "abusers of international law or norms should not be the public face of the UN", he finds himself in a paradox. In a

sense he claims that the US should, and can, lead the UN, even though its reputation and actions during the Bush administration "appeared increasingly to violate the rules and norms of international law" (Fierke 2010, 193). At the same time other states in grave violations of international law should be banished from the international community.

The UN reform plan by Obama administration is concerned with making the UN more effective, accountable, and cost-efficient. Even though that type of reform is necessary and vital to the survival of the UN, and it is the first step taken by the administration, no word in any plan is devoted to the reform of the Security Council and especially the power-relations within. As Brett Schaefer (2009) states, the new policy of the US government has concentrated on reforming the US policy towards the UN, but not on the reform of the UN itself. Even though the changes on US policy in UN are working in the short run, for the US to be able to confirm a strong role in the UN leadership in the long run, a definite position on the SC reform will be necessary (Schaefer 2009).

Jones and Gowan give the administration credit in that it has taken major steps to restore America's stature at the UN, especially among developing countries, and launched new initiatives on human rights and peacekeeping (2009). All in all, President Obama's policy towards the UN can be said to have radically changed from President Bush's policy, where he has been recorded to make statements such that the UN may prove to be irrelevant to the US.²² The attitude of the US towards the UN is now more respectful and engaging than it was during the Bush Presidency. Thus the dominant discourses showcased here are responsible leadership and multilateral engagement.

9.3 Changes in the United States global role and identity

Many academics claim that the United States has moved from Bush's neo-conservatism to Obama's liberal internationalism, with a touch of realism remaining, as seeing the world as it is instead of drawing too idealistic a picture of the future (Patrick 2010; Jones and Gowan 2009; Aaltola and Salenius-Pasternak 2012). Obama's administration

²² "Statement by President Bush, UN General Assembly", 12 September 2002. Available at <http://www.un.org/webcast/ga/57/statements/020912usaE.htm>.

has moved from Bush's pursuit of American primacy to “a new era of engagement” in promoting global and regional security, insisting on multilateralism and other global powers' role in assuming responsibilities alongside the US (Patrick 2010). Obama has also rededicated the United States to respect the international rule of law and human rights by shutting secret CIA prisons and pledging to close the detention facility in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (Patrick 2010), thus rejecting the use of torture, in an attempt to address the loss of legitimacy from which the country suffered under the Bush administration (Fierke 2010, 193). Even though Obama remains rhetorically committed to the closing of the Guantanamo Bay, it still has not been closed as of today.

President Obama has been called a successful “quiet international reformer”, managing the process of bringing the emerging powers into global negotiating fora (Jones and Gowan 2009). The commitment of the President to international cooperation has been even greater than foreign policy analysts have predicted (*ibid.*). A remarkable change has been noted in the personal investment of President Obama to multilateral negotiations, compared to President Bush, who did work with the UN during his latter term, but showed no passion towards the relationship (*ibid.*). President Obama has taken unprecedented acts in claiming responsibility in international meetings, and as the first US President ever chairing a Security Council Summit-level meeting (*ibid.*). President Obama has understood that by the mechanisms he has been using he is able to reinstate the central role of the US in the negotiations, but he has also gained respect and trust by welcoming new members to sit at the top table (*ibid.*).

Even though President Obama has re-engaged the nation in many international forums, it could be argued that he has only so far concentrated on 'easy' decisions that do not shake the core of the country in any way. A true test of Obama's new direction will come from the position he takes regarding the SC reform, as well as the question of the ICC: “If President Obama chooses to submit the Rome Statute of the ICC for the Senate’s advice and consent, thereby accepting (in effect) the principle that an international body has the authority to sit in judgment of the credibility of US legal proceedings” (Patrick 2010). The NSS of 2010 clearly states that the US is not about to consider ratifying the ICC Rome Statute in the near future. Taking a stance in the above

issues would show a definite change in the identity politics of the country. So far no evidence has been found neither in Obama's rhetoric nor in his actions as a President towards a change in the attitude regarding the position of the country in the world order or a change in the identity of the nation. Thus it must be concluded that the dominant discourse practiced by both of the presidents when discussing the global role of the country, is American exceptionalism.

10 CONCLUSIONS

“It’s easy to forget that, when this war began, we were united, bound together by the fresh memory of a horrific attack and by the determination to defend our homeland and the values we hold dear. I refuse to accept the notion that we cannot summon that unity again. I believe with every fiber of my being that we, as Americans, can still come together behind a common purpose, for our values are not simply words written into parchment. They are a creed that calls us together and that has carried us through the darkest of storms as one nation, as one people.”
(President Barack Obama, West Point, New York, December 2, 2009)

10.1 On the question of the identity of the United States

Even though many of us living outside of the United States believe that the hegemonic period of that country is coming to an end sooner or later, that memo has not reached the shores of the US just yet. The Americans believe in their power and will hold on to it indefinitely. In Laclau's words “power should not be conceived as an external relation taking place between two preconstituted identities, because it is power that constitutes the identities themselves” (Mouffe 2005, 141). This is based on one of Jacques Derrida's main ideas that any social objectivity is constituted through acts of power, and that there is no social objectivity that would be self-present to itself and not constructed as a difference (ibid. 141). The research conducted for this thesis shows that the people, and not least the leaders, of the US, believe strongly in the exceptional identity of the nation that differentiates it from other nations around the world.

“The American empire will founder not on external enemies but on the moral overload associated with its mission, because this makes it impossible to maintain the required indifference to the external world” (Herfried Münkler 2007, 154). This can be connected to the beginning of the thesis and David Campbell's argument that the articulation of fear and different dangers that threaten the country is inherent in the identity formation of the nation of the US. “The idea of America endures. Our destiny remains our choice.” (Obama 2011.) Both Bush and Obama constantly refer to grave dangers challenging the nation, but as the sole superpower in the world, what does the

country really have to fear? There is no single enemy or challenger capable of throwing the US down from the position of an Empire, and this confirms that the type of policy-making the presidents practice is merely a way of boosting the country's own identity and position. Were there no dangers in the world, the hegemon would not have any purpose to exist.

Jurgen Habermas claims that “inclusion of the other means that the boundaries of the community are open for all, also and most especially for those who are strangers to one another and want to remain strangers” (2000). This is the opposite of the Campbellian identity formation and can be seen in practice in the EU politics. It is closely connected to the way a nation approaches the concept of sovereignty and varying degrees of it. A classical realist thinker Hans Morgenthau has acknowledged that the Europeans have illustrated that “what is historically conditioned in the idea of the national interest can be overcome only through the promotion in concert of the national interest of a number of nations” (1958). This refers to the type of 'groupism' discussed in the introduction to the thesis. Even though the US leaders already admit in their rhetoric that the above is crucial, it still does not show in practical matters of the country. The US is showing no signs towards letting go of its sovereignty or moving towards 'groupism'.

All analysis of political ideas expressed via rhetoric and translated into political action has to include “study of the institutions in which the potential makers and distributors of ideas operate. And it certainly requires a focus on the institutions that enable or hinder dissemination, or generate ideas and release them through determinate means.” (Finlayson 2004, 541.) Even though it is out of the limits of this thesis to include an extensive study of the US domestic institutions, it did include a brief analysis on the limits and constraints of domestic democratic practices on the formulation of foreign policy. In this light, a word may be said about the US citizens as participants in politics.

American public in general appears cynical about government and politicians (Singh 2006, 26). The American people are supportive of the UN (Ryan 2006, 184)²³. However,

²³ 61% of the American people viewed the UN favorably in 2011 compared to 48% in 2007. Pew Global Attitudes Project, Key Indicators Database. By Pew Research Center
<http://www.pewglobal.org/database/?indicator=26&country=233&response=Favorable>.

they may not be aware of what goes on in the relationship between the US and the UN. The US public also has a very limited view of how non-Americans view the role of the US in the world, as international media coverage in the country is very weak compared to other states (Forman 2003, ix). American people seem unaware of how the world is changing today. The American society thus can be called the least informed in the (Western) world on the inevitable impact on global changes currently under way (Mahbubani 2003, 139).

Mouffe argues that also the separation of political frontiers to the camps of left and right, as is done in the US, is harmful for the political process, as the public feels that not enough institutional outlets are provided for their multiple forms of identification, which include religious, nationalist, and ethnic forms among many others. This creates disaffection towards the political parties and the political process in general, and discourages political participation and thus hinders the constitution of a collective identity (2005, 5). “A subject who can have an identity defined prior to the values and objectives that he/she chooses. It is, in effect, the capacity to choose, not the choices that he makes, that defines such a subject. He can never have ends which are constitutive of his identity and this denies him the possibility of participation in a community where it is the very definition of who he is that is in question” (Mouffe 2005, 29). The American two-party system can be compared to many Western European nations' multi-party systems. This, again, opens up the range for the individual to belong to many specific entities instead of having to formulate his/her identity in terms of belonging to one camp and fiercely opposing the other camp.

This has led to the realization that the strongest identification people have is to the faith and not to the state (Dunne 2010, 150). This supports the claim that the change needed to act globally today stems from within the people and the feelings they have towards others in the world. Today more than hard military power any given state possesses, what matters are trust, relationships, and loyalty. In his rhetoric President Obama expressed the need to reform the domestic political system, when he claimed that something is inherently broken in Washington, D.C. He brings this issue up in his 2010 State of the Union speech, calling for elected officials to high standards of governing

instead of pickering about elections²⁴. Even though it is out of the range of this thesis to concentrate on domestic political reform, it should be recognized that opening the discussion on a topic is the first step in renewal.

I could not agree more with Didier Jacobs who says that “there will be no sustained global peace and security without overcoming nationalism” (2010). This does not mean that we will have to completely lose our national identities, but instead we do have to lose the attitude that some of us would be superior or exceptional in nature and in practice, and we do need to move “from a missionary to a normative approach to spreading peace and democracy” (Jacobs 2010, 117-121). Peace can only be achieved by peaceful means. Neither Bush nor Obama show any signs of overcoming nationalism or advancing national interests by peaceful means. There is still light at the end of the tunnel; a recent survey indicates that the US public today is less likely to regard the US culture as superior to others. Fewer people believe in American exceptionalism, and this is especially the view among younger, educated Americans, compared to people over fifty. About half of Americans still believe their culture is superior, compared to six-in-ten believing so in 2002.²⁵

10.2 On the question of new policy by Obama

During the Bush administration the country was in decline in terms of legitimacy, in as much as assertive unilateralism spreads distrust and hostility towards the US by other global actors, and that of which makes it harder to translate power into influence as needed (Ryan 2006, 184). In this light it could be argued that Obama has reversed this

²⁴ “What frustrates the American people is a Washington where every day is Election Day. We can't wage a perpetual campaign where the only goal is to see who can get the most embarrassing headlines about the other side, a belief that if you lose, I win. Neither party should delay or obstruct every single bill just because they can. The confirmation of well-qualified public servants shouldn't be held hostage to the pet projects or grudges of a few individual Senators. Washington may think that saying anything about the other side, no matter how false, no matter how malicious, is just part of the game. But it's precisely such politics that has stopped either party from helping the American people. Worse yet, it's sowing further division among our citizens, further distrust in our Government. So, no, I will not give up on trying to change the tone of our politics. I know it's an election year. But we still need to govern.”

²⁵ “American Exceptionalism Subsides. The American-Western European Values Gap”. Survey report by Pew Global Attitudes Project released November 17, 2011 and updated February 29, 2012 by Pew Research Center <http://www.pewglobal.org/2011/11/17/the-american-western-european-values-gap/>.

trend by making selective global moves towards re-gaining the trust and respect of the global community and thus cleaning up the reputation of the country. Some argue that the US reputation has suffered so much that even Obama's personal commitment will not be able to restore it (Patrick 2010). Global surveys show that confidence in the US president by other nations was very low during President Bush's last two years, sometimes in single digits, whereas in 2009 confidence rose sharply, sometimes hitting almost 100%. The level of confidence has since dropped again, remaining above 50% in many countries and above 30% in all²⁶.

Thus it could be argued that President Obama has been undertaking a challenge of face-saving, cleaning of a reputation, and reinstatement of a friendly approach in the international arena. With his policy of responsible leadership and multilateral approach, it is evident that it matters to President Obama, and to the US, what the world thinks of the superpower. "US foreign policy must be informed by a deeper appreciation of the way the United States is perceived abroad, arguing that unilateralism undercuts US national interests" (Forman 2003, ix). When Obama took office, many had high hopes for him. Now, towards the end of his first term, many appear disappointed in his achievements (Aaltola and Saloniemi-Pasternak 2012, 5). This is also evident when comparing President Obama's official approval ratings of 65% in January 2009, to his term-low of 42% in the fall of 2011²⁷. His approval ratings are going up again in 2012, but at this time they may have more to do with the presidential election campaigning than how people feel like he has performed during his first term.

Even though much change and important reforms have been achieved, the Obama administration has not put forward a new revolutionary doctrine, philosophy, or strategy. Even though the world has experienced an economic crisis during the past four years, there has not been, during Obama's term, a catachrestic moment in history, which would have provided enough wind to the sails of change for Obama to surge into a heroic global role. The current crisis has not provided the world with an opportunity for re-

²⁶ Pew Global Attitudes Project. Available at <http://www.pewglobal.org/database/?indicator=6>.

²⁷ Obama approval index history by Rasmussen Reports http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/obama_administration/obama_approval_index_history and by Newport and Saad 2012 <http://www.gallup.com/poll/153800/Obama-Monthly-Approval-Edges-Higher-March.aspx>.

making the world order as it is now, as it typically is the case after a destructive war, for example (Patrick 2010). Since the times are quite normal, it has to be acknowledged that change occurs slowly. The Bush doctrine, if not as a name but in practice, will prevail because no comprehensive or compelling alternatives have been introduced. Only a return to partial multilateralism is evident. Unilateralism will prevail, but it does not mean isolationism, but rather an American form of internationalism that represents a long tradition in the history of the US (Singh 2006, 26-27).

Even where a turn toward multilateralism is evident, it most likely occurs because of changing circumstances instead of a change of hearts regarding the policy (Malone and Khong 2003, 423). This means that sometimes it is useful for the US to act multilaterally, if it produces greater results, and sometimes the avenue for acting alone does not exist as a viable one. However, I have not been able to trace a trend towards accepting the concept of multilateralism as superior, lawful, or the only way to proceed in the foreign policy decisions by President Obama. When attempting to solve pressing problems and crises with speed and finality, the leaders in Washington resort to military solutions more often than would be advisable. This leads to Münkler's conclusion that democratic empires resort to military methods even more readily and more often than authoritarian ones (2007, 155).

Even though it can be concluded that many of President Obama's policies comply with the liberal international worldview, such as his promotion of democracy, deepening of the linkages in the international trade arena, and re-engaging in the multilateral network of international organizations, many members of the global community still have difficulty in trusting that the hegemony is truly acting according to the Kantian principles of legitimacy and negotiation. The continued growth of liberal practices cannot be taken for granted, and leaders must continue to search for openings for actions that are at the same time mindful of the others and in the self-interest of the actor. The US still reserves the right to rely on its superior armed forces and benefits and temptations its dominance allows (Russett 2010, 112-113). In any case it will take time and effort for Obama, or any US President, to recover from the Bush Doctrine of global imperial geopolitics and the ideology of economic security under which guise the

War on Terror was raised to secure the oil of the Middle East (Rupert 2010, 172).

It could be concluded that even though the US accepts most of the points advocated by globalists, including issues and tasks that require liberal internationalist collective efforts to solve, and which pose a serious threat to sovereignty and the position of a nation-state in the global order, it is still able to defend its realist position by departmentalizing the globalization thesis, by concluding that most of the globalization efforts deal with the economic domains, and much of international politics still remain static and hence essentially realist in nature. It is believed that the realist and neorealist theorists have the most to lose in the globalization debate, and thus they have been most persistently permissive of the extent of globalization so far (Hay 2010, 280-284).

10.3 On the question of the US – UN relationship

The US created the UN, but then refused to follow the rules (Ryan 2006, 174). This has been a popular trend for the US in the history of international organizations and agreements. The country plays a strong role in shaping institutions and agreements (such as the ICC and the Kyoto Protocol), but when it at the end opts out of ratifying them, it crucially hinders the possibilities of these relevant regimes to achieve their global goals (Malone and Khong 2003, 4, 15). However, the refusal to participate also weakens the realization of the US to achieve its own objectives, and this is the ultimate paradox the country faces today. This kind of behavior also damages the reputation of the US, as it weakens the position of foreign governments to sell their partnership with the US to their own publics (ibid. 15). The inconsistent, nonconsultant, and coercive nature of the US partnership also makes it more difficult for allies to trust the US (ibid. 16).

The US administration has naturally defended its policies and has responded to criticism towards accusations of the country not playing by the rules of the UN. Tactics have included attacking the integrity of the UN organization by accusing the Security Council members of not having the courage and strength to stand up against the tyrant of Iraq at the moment of crisis. The credibility of the UN personnel has also been questioned, and

accusations of corruption have been brought onto the table. All this prep work allowed the US to claim that in acting on Iraq without a SC mandate saved the credibility of the UN (Ryan 2006, 179).

In the relationship with the UN, continuation of selective engagement and a case-by-case multilateralism still exists (Malone and Khong 2003, 422). It is to be expected that conflicts between the US and the UN will remain, as the US shows no signs of abandoning the preventive foreign policy, and the UN is showing no signs of accepting this kind of policy as a part of its mandate (Ryan 2006, 183). Malone concludes that even though it is recognized that the UN cannot work optimally without a US participation, the diplomatic blocking power of the US government is still not complete (2003, 27). A true victory of multilateralism, however, can only be achieved if the great powers, and especially the United States, stand behind it (Mahbubani 2003, 139). Research does point to the direction that the UN reform will increase (Singh 2006, 26), and that, hopefully, will lead to the strengthening of the most important institution of our time.

As I now look back at the initial research questions and hypotheses laid down at the beginning of this research project, some final remarks are in order. The analysis shows that some change has indeed occurred in the US foreign policy rhetoric as well as in concrete action, as was the hypothesis. It has been shown that President Obama has changed the direction of the country in the foreign policy field, and even though his administration has faced some criticism towards the end of the term, it should be remembered that change occurs slowly in the bureaucratic structure, and the domestic political structure of the US can partly be blamed for that. All in all, the researcher's opinion is that President Obama is headed in the right direction, and his re-election this year would confirm that and provide a stable platform for Obama to proceed for the next four years. Obama has not only taken a new direction in foreign policy, but he has also revived the conversation regarding domestic political reform.

In regards to the second research question on the relationship between the US and the UN, the results are mixed. Even though President Obama has revitalized the role of the

US within the UN system, and is taking a more multilateral approach towards international politics than President Bush did, the beginning hypothesis remains that it seems this is merely a fresh approach to achieve the same results that were wanted before. The US wants to lead the UN, reform it to fit the country's needs, and make sure it advances the nation's interests. Yet, at the same time, the administration has realized that while helping themselves it serves to help others on the way. However, the research and analysis shows no signs of the US' willingness to move towards 'groupism' or common identity, or to acknowledge one's position as an equal in the world order.

As the researcher's position remains that only through the abandonment of the American exceptional identity and the 'us' versus the 'others' thinking can progress occur, this raises a question of how this may be achieved. The answer to this question requires a whole other thesis, however. I may still suggest here a few choices to start from. Tough choices have to be made, but they are not impossible to achieve, as has been proved elsewhere already. As Wendt agrees, the European Union is already well under way in taking the required steps towards a kind of a world state on a regional scale (2003, 506).

Wendt argues that the material capabilities and technological advantages of today undermine the ability of states to properly protect their citizens (2003, 493). This has led to the overpowering value dedicated to military and security matters and considerations of dangers and threats in the US. The states' struggle for recognition in the system of anarchy will thus lead to the system's own demise (ibid. 494). This has to ultimately resolve in the creation of universal collective security system (NATO?), requires some kind of a binding decision-making body (UN?), and will be composed of a global social agency with collective identity (ibid. 506). In this projection states could still survive as local autonomies and practice culture, economics, and local politics as they wish, but they inevitably would have to lose their sovereignty in matters of security politics, and let go of such elite formations as SC permanent memberships. Naturally this is only one suggestion on how to organize the system in the future, and even though for some it seems many sacrifices would have to be made to achieve it, I do not see this as a bad way to proceed at all.

11 AFTERWORD

Numerous academics, intellectuals, and technology experts have provided us with multiple viable solutions and suggestions on how to work on the issue of global democracy and make it work better for all citizens on earth. Still, for some reason, the implementation is non-existent. We have the UN, and we know that the UN needs to be reformed now to bring the Security Council regional representation up to date, and the General Assembly should be reformed as elected peoples' parliamentary body. We have the EU, which is clearly not perfect (yet), but all participant states acknowledge that the benefits of membership are greater than shying away from the union completely.

I agree with Raffaele Marchetti in that either democracy is global, or it is not democracy at all (2010, 105). The cornerstone on almost all reform and multilateral proposals is the United States of America. Yes, that is the most powerful nation within the system of nation-states today, but I refuse to believe that all of the other 199 nations sharing this system cannot get things done without the US participation. As Archibugi stated, one man alone cannot change the world, no matter how powerful he is (2010, 91).

In the end, it all comes down to human nature. Creed, influence, and power politics still rule overwhelmingly those who sit on the highest throne. No matter how noble and cooperative people seem on paper, the realist human nature always arises from the anarchic jungle that we inhabit. Those in power wish to maintain their position by making multilateral institutions work for them, not the other way around. I agree with Wendt, and Nadia Urbinati, that removing the security dilemma completely from the agenda is the only way to open up the space for new kinds of multilateral cooperation. The global democratic goal should definitely not be reached by any means. (Urbinati 2010, 96.) As long as we only participate globally when it helps us become stronger at home will not solve our global challenges today. People need to want to help others around them, because only when strong together, can we achieve greater things for everyone on a global scale. Maybe I have to be more patient and listen to Archibugi and David Held (2011) when they say that it is only natural that transformations and change of institutions take a long time. At least we are headed in the right direction.

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